



Charging and Remissions Policy

1. General Principles

Governors value all our students equally and believe it is their duty to ensure equal access to a wide curriculum whatever parental income may be. Governors have responsibility as stewards acting on behalf of the Local Authority and Diocese of Bristol to ensure best value for money.

Charging for educational activities at the School is covered by the regulations encompassed within the Education Act 1996.

The general principle within the Act is that no charge will be made for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- Within school hours (but excluding the mid-day break)
- Required for the National Curriculum but out of school hours
- For statutory religious education
- For a prescribed public examination prepared for by the School

There are, however, exceptions where the School can make charges, and there are situations where the School can request voluntary contributions from parents/carers.

2. Exceptions

Charges are permitted under the Act to meet the costs of the following:

- Board and lodging on residential educational trips
- Educational and non-educational trips out of school hours except for those required for the National Curriculum
- Lost, damaged or destroyed school property and breakages
- Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments provided that the tuition is not required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- Materials/ingredients required to produce a finished product made in school (e.g. in art, design or technology lessons)
- Entering a student for a public examination which is not prescribed in regulations, and for preparing the student for such an examination out of school hours
- Entering a student for a public examination against the wishes of the school
- Re-marking an examination paper where the re-mark is requested by the parent/carer or student
- Re-sits of public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school
- Voluntary optional extras provided outside of school hours (or mainly outside school hours)

In all cases where a permitted charge is made, parents/carers will be told the amount in advance. Charges will not be set with the intention of exceeding the actual cost per student incurred. Where a residential trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, students whose parents/carers are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of the costs of the board and lodging elements of the trip:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)

3. **Voluntary Contributions**

The Act also permits voluntary contributions to be requested for any specific visit and/or activity either inside or outside of school time.

In all cases where voluntary contributions are requested, parents/carers will be told the amount in advance and reassured that there is no obligation to pay.

No individual student will be excluded from a visit or activity if their parent/carer is unable or unwilling to pay the voluntary contribution. Applicants to the Enabling Fund will not be disadvantaged if places are allocated on a first come first served basis. However, the visit or activity may have to be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received and the School is unable to make up the shortfall.

4. **Other Charges**

To actively engage in learning, be ready to learn and be able to learn in many different contexts, it is essential that students have the right basic equipment e.g. student planner, pens, pencils, rulers, calculator. Whilst there is no legal or formal requirement for parents/carers to provide these items the School actively encourages parents/carers and students to purchase them.

Some optional items of equipment may on occasion be offered for sale by the School e.g. calculator, revision guides, etc.

Photocopying and/or printing which is not required by a member of staff may be charged for.

5. **Refunds**

Refunds of charges will be reduced by the amount of any non-refundable deposits made. Refunds of charges or voluntary contributions received will be made in the following circumstances:

- Cancellation of trips or activities due to circumstances beyond the student's control
- The School deciding that a student should not take part in a trip or activity for whatever reason
- Wherever a student, having entered for a public examination against the School's wishes, achieves a grade in that examination
- In the event that an examination re-mark requested by a parent/carer or student is successful (the reimbursement of fees will be made by the examination board)
- In other circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher

The level of voluntary contribution requested will not be set with the intention of exceeding the actual cost per student incurred.

Where there is a deficit following an educational trip, visit or activity, we will not ask for an additional charge or contribution. Equally where there is a surplus of under £10 per student this will not be refunded. Any surplus in these circumstances would accrue to the 'School Fund' which is reserved for expenditure on student activity.

6. **Enabling Fund**

The Enabling Fund is administered by a group of Trustees made up of parents/carers and School staff. It has two aims:

- To support students in cases of financial hardship who would otherwise be unable to participate in a school educational trip, visit or activity
- To provide additional resources in order to enrich the educational experience of students which would be beyond the means of normal school funding

All applications to the Enabling Fund in respect of a school educational trip, visit or activity must be made in advance with sufficient time allowed to permit the School to determine the financial viability of the trip, visit or activity.