

St George's School

	Charging & Remissions Policy	
	Committee: Finance and Facilities Committee	
	Co-ordinator : Mrs L Howard	
	Last Reviewed : Summer 2021	Next Review : Autumn 2023
	Policy links to	

Background & Aims

This policy takes guidance from the DfE's May 2018 Departmental Advice 'Charging for School Activities' and from sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996.

The Governors recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including sports, clubs and societies, music trips and residential visits, can make towards pupils' education. The governors aim to promote and provide a wide range of such activities, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

Main Points

- The governing board, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in this advice, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- The school must ensure that we inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits, of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits from the date this policy was reviewed.
- Nothing in this policy document precludes the Governors from inviting parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an activity within the school.
- This policy document will be provided to parents when their child first joins the school and will remain available to parents on the school website.

School Charging

Education

The governing board and school **cannot** charge* for:

- an admission application - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent

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- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school, however, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents if the pupil fails without good reason to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus.

**charge is defined as a required payment. A request for voluntary contribution is not deemed to be a charge.*

The governing board and school **can** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them
- optional extras
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- community facilities

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment.

Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the national curriculum
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - c) part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- the cost of buildings and accommodation
- non-teaching staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra

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Any charges made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. There will be no element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

A 5% charge for administration (up to a maximum of £10/person/activity) will be included in the cost of the activity. Money paid for trips which may be left over when the account is settled, and which amounts to less than £5.00 or 5% (whichever is greater) per pupil, will not be returned but used to offset any additional costs.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation or this policy document precludes the Governors and school from inviting parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution for the benefit of the school or for any school activities. However, if the activity can only be funded if sufficient parents are willing to make a voluntary contribution it will be made clear to parents at the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, the visit will be cancelled. This will be made clear to parents in the trip/activity information. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit (further information is located in the Equal Opportunities Policy).

When requests are made for voluntary contributions, parents will not be made to feel pressured into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. We will not send colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and no direct debit or standing order mandates will be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

Music Tuition

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition.

Charges can be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

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The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22 (i) of the Children Act 1989).

At the time of this policy review, instrumental tuition at St George's School, is provided by a separate organisation, Musicale Ltd, who are based on the school site. Subject to the school's budgetary situation, instrumental music lessons provided by Musicale Ltd for the school's pupils during school hours and subject to the parents being in receipt of certain benefits, may be subsidised.

Transport

The governing board and school **cannot** charge for:

- transporting pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination at the school
- transport provided in connection with a term time educational visit (this can be subject to a voluntary contribution)

Support for the cost of board and lodging for eligible students on residential visits

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, we will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

These are the same criteria which make a student eligible for free school meals, and it is by reference to our school record of who receives free school meals that we would endorse that a student would qualify for this residential visit subsidy.

The Free School Meals eligibility criteria is outlined on the Hertfordshire County Council website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals or cs.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk Such a parent might still face some costs on a residential visit e.g. entry costs of site visits. The trip leaders concerned could clarify this.

Education Partly During School Hours

A charge can be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum, not an essential or compulsory part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at school and not part of religious education.

Non-Residential Activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

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Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential Visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day. E.g If pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This would count as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and can therefore be subject to charge.

The Governors and school reserve the right to invite parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of residential visits including; board and lodging, transport, supply teachers to cover those accompanying the visit and insurance for residential visits which are deemed to take place in school hours, or are part of a public examination syllabus, or the National Curriculum, or for Religious Education.

State Boarding Schools

As a state boarding school the governing board can charge for overnight board and lodging, and this would equally apply to anyone staying temporarily as part of a flexi-boarding arrangement