



Charging and Remission Policy

Introduction

In accordance with Section 33 of the School's Funding Agreement, Stratford Girls' Grammar School is required to determine the charging and remissions policy required to address Section 457 of the Education Act 1996. This policy has been drawn up with regard to guidance published by the DfE in November 2013: *Charging for School Activities*. The Governing Body confirm their belief that this policy is in line with legislation.

The Governing Body acknowledges the right of every student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost. The governors also recognise the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education and aim to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

(Throughout this policy, the term "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

1. General Principle

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 instrumental or vocal tuition, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent
- for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school
- for exam re-sits if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit at the school.

However there are exceptions where the school can make charges.

2. Exceptions

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

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the pupil's parent wishes her to own them (eg in art, design, food or technology lessons)
- optional extras, including:
 - education provided out of school time that is not a) part of the national curriculum, b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public exam that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or c) part of religious education
 - exam entry fees if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the exam at the school
 - transport (other than that required to take the pupil to school or in connection with educational visits)
 - board and lodging on residential educational trips
 - voluntary lunchtime or after school clubs .
- music and vocal tuition (individually or in groups) when at the request of the pupil's parents
- exam entry fees if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet the exam requirements for the syllabus

- re-marking an examination paper where the re-mark is requested by the parent or student
- re-sits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school

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

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided
- the cost of buildings and accommodation
- non-teaching staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts purely to provide an optional extra or to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or vocal tuition, where this is an optional extra.

In all cases where a permitted charge is made, parents will be told the amount in advance. Any charge 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. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. 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.

3. Voluntary Contributions

The Act permits voluntary contributions to be requested for any specific visit and/or activity either inside or outside of school time. Headteachers or governing bodies may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of a) any activity which takes place during school hours, b) school equipment and c) school funds generally. In all cases where voluntary contributions are requested, parents will be told the amount in advance, and parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed below will be informed that support is available to them. The level of voluntary contribution requested will not be set with the intention of exceeding the actual cost per student incurred. No individual student will be excluded from a visit or activity if their parent chooses not to pay the voluntary contribution. However the visit or activity may have to be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. Care will be taken when making requests for voluntary contributions to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into paying: it is voluntary and not compulsory.

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 eg pens, pencils, rulers, calculators. Whilst there is no legal or formal requirement for parents to provide these items the school actively encourages parents and students to purchase them. Some optional items of equipment may on occasion be offered for sale by the school eg calculators, revision guides etc. The school will also seek payment from parents for damage to or loss of school property caused wilfully or negligently by their child.

5. Refunds

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. Refunds will be reduced by the amount of any non-refundable deposits made.
- In the event that an examination re-mark requested by a parent or student is successful (when the reimbursement of fees will be made by the examination board).

In other circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

6. Support Fund

Where charges are to be made to parents, or voluntary contributions sought, these will be advised in advance and collected prior to the activity. Requests for help from parents will be

considered and assistance provided within the limits of any support fund that may be available. Complete confidentiality will be observed in all such matters.

For each request of financial support the Headteacher and Business Manager meet to decide any help offered. The following guidelines are applied, though in certain circumstances additional help may be given:

For pupils on free school meals or receiving Pupil Premium Funding (including LAC and Post LAC):

- No request shall be made for contributions towards curriculum based day trips
- The cost shall be met in full for curriculum based residential trips (eg Language exchanges)
- The cost shall be met in full for the Year 7 PGL residential trip
- 2/3 rds of the cost shall be met from school funds for non curriculum based weekday term time trips (eg Activities week overseas trips)
- No contribution shall be made to non curriculum based trips in the school holidays (eg ski trips) or evenings or weekends (eg theatre trips)

In addition the school will provide on request (as per the Pupil Premium Promise)

- A grant of £50 a year towards uniform costs.
- A grant of £30 a year towards sports kit.
- Free laboratory coat and other essential equipment.
- Free essential school trips, where these are a necessary part of the curriculum.
- Free instrumental music lessons (or singing lessons) to learn to play a musical instrument, subject to a recommendation from the school's music department.
- Free revision guides as recommended by individual subject teachers.

For other pupils where circumstances are particularly difficult:

- Contributions for curriculum based day time trips will not be pursued beyond the initial request and reminder.
- A 1/3 rd contribution may be made for residential trips during weekday term time
- No contribution shall be made to non curriculum based trips in the school holidays (eg ski trips) or evenings or weekends(eg theatre trips)

Should there be an appeal against any decision made, this should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

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