



STRATFORD GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Charging and Remission Policy

Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000 Yes

To be published on website Yes

Policy ownership

Governor committee: Resources

Department responsible: Finance

Post-holder: (title and name) Clare Webster, Business Manager

Linked procedures

Responsible person Jacqui Cornell

Implementation date July 2024

Planned review interval Every three years

Planned next review date: July 2027

Introduction

Stratford Girls' Grammar School is a standalone academy. The terms Trustees and Governors are used interchangeably. The Trust Board is referred to as the Governing Body. Within policies, any reference to Governors and/or Trustees or the Governing Body or Trustees Board encompasses the same function. Throughout this policy, the term "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child.

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. Schools are permitted to charge for other items and experiences provided to the pupils. Schools may also invite voluntary contributions to help support these provisions. Schools have a duty to inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits that support is available towards certain costs when they are being asked to make contributions e.g. towards school visits.

1. Objectives and targets

The Governing Board has set up this policy for certain activities which take place in the school. The purpose of this policy is to clarify which items and experiences that the school provides may have a levy charged upon them, how much of the cost the school expects parents to be charged and who will be offered support to pay for items and experiences for their children. This charging and remission policy is implemented within the letter of the law, and also embracing the spirit of it.

2. 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.

3. 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.

- 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-scrutiny of an examination paper where the re-scrutiny 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, including the costs of administering any trips or activities, 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.

4. 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 certain benefits listed below will be informed that support is available to them and may apply, in confidence, to the Finance Manager. 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.

5. 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 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.

6. 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 exceptional circumstances, the parent may be able to receive a refund through the trip insurance policy
- 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.

7. 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 on eligible benefits will be considered and assistance provided within the limits of any support fund that may be available and in all statutorily required cases. Requests for support are to be sent to the Finance Manager at finance@sggs.org.uk and complete confidentiality will be observed in all such matters.

Eligible benefits include:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances (the government plans to prescribe these circumstances when universal credit is fully rolled out).
- Income support.
- Income-based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child tax credit, provided that working tax credit is not also received and the family's income as assessed by HMRC does not exceed certain limits.
- Working tax credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit.
- The guarantee element of state pension credit.
- An income-related employment and support allowance.

Where a parent does not receive an eligible benefit, the school will nonetheless consider sympathetically requests for assistance e.g. in the phasing of contributions, provided that all such phased contributions have been made by the time the trip or event takes place.