

CHARGES AND REMISSION POLICY

Rationale

It is the responsibility of the governors to determine and keep under review a charging and remissions policy before charging may be made (Education Reform Act 1988 and Education and Inspections Act 2006). The objectives described in DES Circular 2189 Education Reform Act 1998: Charges for School Activities, are to maintain the right to free school education, to clarify the law and to maintain valuable optional activities.

The word “charge” is used throughout this document to denote a compulsory payment which may legally be required. All other payments are “voluntary contributions”.

Policy

The school recognises the principle as part of its equality policy, that the education provided for its registered students should be free of charge if it:

- takes place in school hours; or
- is outside school hours but is required as part of a specification for a prescribed public examination.

The purpose of the charging and remission policy is to ensure that:

- (a) the school is able to provide a vibrant and extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and educational visits;
- (b) students should have maximum possible access to the programme of activities at Redborne, irrespective of the financial circumstances of the family;
- (c) any charges and voluntary contributions are advertised clearly and known in advance according to the Governors’ published policy.

Guidelines

1. Charges cannot be made for admitting students to the school.
2. Education provided during school hours must be free. This includes essential materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the LA or the school carrying students between the school and an activity.
3. The one exception to 2 above is that charges may be made for teaching students to play a musical instrument or for singing lessons.
4. Payment for music lessons will be made directly by the parents to Central Bedfordshire Music. Where a music tutor is self-employed and independent of the music service, payment will be made directly to the tutor.
5. Where a student is following an examination course in music which involves performance as an examined component, tuition costs for one set of lessons will be reimbursed by the school in arrears, providing that the student has maintained a good record of attendance at individual lessons and has contributed to any ensemble playing as required. Charges will not be reimbursed to students who follow courses in music technology or BTEC Music as there is no performance component.

6. No charge will be made for the first entry to any prescribed public examination for which a student has been prepared at the school unless;
 - A student fails, without good reason, to attend or meet the requirements of the examination.
 - For AS examinations where a student is going on to take the full A level and the school is confident that the student will pass the full A level no entry will be made by the school for the AS examination. Should a student in this position wish to take the AS level then they would be expected to pay for the exam. Where the school feels a student could be at risk of failing an A level, not completing the full A level or not intending to take up the full A level an AS entry will be made by the school.
7. Students will be expected to pay for any retake examination entries.
8. Where a parent asks for examination results to be re-scrutinised, the charge made by the Examining Body for this service will normally be passed on to the parents.
9. Where education is provided for registered students wholly or mainly outside school hours and is not required for public examinations, national curriculum or religious education this is defined by Section 109 of the Act as an “optional extra” and charges may be made. The cost of an “optional extra” will be determined on the basis of the cost to each individual student participating in the activity. The amount of any charge shall be payable by the parent of the student concerned although participation in any optional extra must be subject to parental agreement.
10. Parents can be expected to pay for transport from home to and from an activity sanctioned, though not provided, by the LA (eg work experience).
11. Students are entitled to free transport to school, provided by the LA, if they are in years 9-11, live over 3 miles away from Redborne and this is the nearest suitable school to their home.
12. In addition, students in years 9-11 from low-income families who attend one of the three nearest suitable schools and who live between 2 and 6 miles from the school are also entitled to free transport to school.
13. Where students are not entitled to free transport to and from school and transport services are provided by Redborne or by a third party on behalf of Redborne, a charge will be levied for the transport provided.
14. Recovery of costs of breakages or damage to school property will be charged to those responsible (eg broken windows – the cost of materials will be charged).
15. Where a student has stolen an item from the school, the cost of replacement will be charged, in addition to any other disciplinary sanctions (e.g. an exclusion) that may result.
16. Where items are loaned to students, and the item is lost or damaged, the replacement cost will be charged.
17. Where items are loaned from the library for a fixed period, charges will be levied at a reasonable rate if the items are returned late.
18. Voluntary contributions may be asked for any activities (including visits or incidental transport) in school time and outside it. However, no student may be excluded on the grounds that a contribution has not been made. If, however, the activity relies on voluntary contributions for it to take place, this should be stated in a letter to parents at the outset.
19. Voluntary contributions may also be requested for materials (e.g. books) that are over and above the basic minimum required for the course, or where the student indicates in advance that they wish to purchase a copy (for example so that they can annotate a text with their own notes). However, all students should have access to the work set as part

- of the course whether or not they choose not to make a contribution.
20. Where there is severe financial hardship, it may be possible to assist with payments for a school activity from the School Fund. Assistance with payments may also be offered to those students for whom the school receives additional finance through the Pupil Premium. The payments are made at the discretion of the Principal.

Governors' Statement

In conformity with the requirement of the Education Reform Act 1988 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, it is the policy of the Governing Body:

- 1 To levy, except where students are entitled to statutory remission, a charge for all board and lodging costs on residential visits.
- 2 To levy a charge for activities wholly or mainly outside school hours which are not in preparation for a prescribed public examination.
- 3 To levy no charge for first time examination entries except where:
 - a The school has not prepared students for the examination in the year for which the entry is made, or
 - b A student has failed, for no good reason, to complete the requirements of the examination, or to attend for it.
 - c A student going on to a full A level who is fully expected to pass the A level chooses to sit an AS exam
- 4 To levy no charge in respect of books, materials, equipment, instruments or incidental transport provided in connection with courses taught at the school or for school sports fixtures. The exception to this rule is where parents wish to purchase products (e.g. books which the students wish to retain, ingredients for cooking, materials for making an artefact that will be taken home).
- 5 To request voluntary contributions from parents for school activities in or out of school time for which compulsory charges cannot be levied, but which can only be provided if there is sufficient voluntary funding, whilst ensuring that no student is excluded from such activity by reason of viability or unwillingness to make a voluntary contribution. Where voluntary contributions are requested, letters to parents will include "Under Government legislation the school cannot directly ask for payment. We ask, therefore, for a voluntary contribution of ...to cover the cost. We cannot demand a contribution, but clearly if we do not cover the cost of this trip/visit, it will not be able to take place." The Principal, at his/her discretion, may use the School Fund to assist those students who are financially disadvantaged.
- 6 To seek payment from parents for damage to or loss of school property caused wilfully or negligently by their children.
- 7 To leave to the Principal's decision the proportion of costs of an activity which should be charged to public or non-public funds.
- 8 To delegate to the Chairman and the Principal the determination of any individual case arising from the implementation of this policy.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Governors' Finance Subcommittee every three years

Dissemination of the Policy

A copy of the policy is available on the website and as a hard copy to parents, the LA and OFSTED through the Principal on request.

Other Policies that have relevance are:

Admissions and Appeals
Equality Policy
Educational Visits and Journeys
Library Policy

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