

	Charging and Remission Policy	
	Last reviewed: November 2021	Next review: November 2024
	Linked Governor: Lorna Rolfe	SLT Member: Andrea West

Ashlyns School believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The policy has been informed by the DFES guidance "Planning and Funding Extended Schools" and "Charging for School Activities" (May 2018).

The policy takes into account the school's equality and curriculum policy.

Purpose

Ashlyns School will charge students at full cost for all activities which are deemed under the Act to take place outside school hours unless that activity is required to fulfil:

- I. Any requirements specified in the syllabus of a prescribed examination.
- II. Any statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum.
- III. Any statutory duties relating to religious education.

Remission of these charges will be made in accordance with the Act in those cases where the Governors are obliged to do so; for example, during a residential activity no charge for board and lodgings can be made to parent/guardians who are in receipt of income support or family credit. Voluntary contributions may be invited for all activities which take place during or outside the school day and for which no charge can legally be imposed.

At the Headteacher's discretion, remission of charges (in part or in full) may be made for trips or activities outside of the guidelines suggested above. For example, the Headteacher may authorise full or part remission for an outdoor activity (such as a Duke of Edinburgh Expedition) when considering the individual circumstances of the child and family and any related pastoral needs. Such a remission would be made when related pastoral issues were of relevant importance, for example, as part of a pastoral support plan where the student's behaviour and personal development were being managed. The Headteacher will only authorise such remissions when sufficient funds are available and where he is satisfied that the family suffer qualifying financial hardship (receiving income support, free school meals, uniform grant etc). In all cases, a full report of remissions made in an academic year will be available for governors' scrutiny.

Guidelines for Implementation

- Music fees: Individual music instrument tuition is a voluntary activity. The Governors will therefore remit charges.

Parent/carers must give the school a half term's notice regarding cessation of lessons; otherwise a charge will be made. This notice must be in writing and a proof of receipt of notice must be returned by the school to the parents/carer.

The School supports students studying for GCSE Level practical music lessons by contributing a termly sum towards the lessons, and those studying for A Level by covering the cost of one lesson per week for practical music lessons.

- Public examinations: The Headteacher will notify parent/carers of the examinations entries as soon as practicable after the decision has been made.
- Only a single entry per subject will be paid for by the School or Education Authority. Any additional entry or variation must be paid by the parent/carer.
- If a pupil is being prepared for a non-prescribed examination, with the parent/carers' agreement, a charge will be made for the entry.
- The cost of any examination where the pupil has been entered by the school, but NOT prepared for the examination by the school, must be borne by the parent/carer.
- If parents/carers ask for examination results to be scrutinised or remarked the cost must be borne by the parent/carer. In cases where the school asks for a remark, no charges will be made.
- If a student fails to attend an examination, or fails to complete the course work or other requirements which prevent him/her receiving a graded result then the parent/carer will be requested to reimburse the school for the entry fees. Absence from an examination due to illness, validated with a Medical Certificate, will be accepted and no reimbursement of fees will be necessary.
- Where a student or parent/carer requests to retake a public examination or part of an examination (module), the school will charge the full entry fee. However, if the student resits the examination at the request of the school (for example, if teaching has been interrupted for some unforeseen reason), no charge will be made.
- Breakages and damage to school property: The Governors may charge parent/carers an amount up to the full costs (including any overheads) of repair or replacement of school property damaged or defaced as a result of that pupil's unreasonable behaviour. The amount charged will be determined by the Headteacher, taking into account the specific individual circumstances leading to the breakage.
- Art & Technology: Students intending to take home anything produced in a lesson where raw materials or ingredients are required must declare this intention in advance and either pay for or provide those raw materials.
- The sale of books, educational material and equipment by departments to students is permitted at cost (including administration and other reasonable costs incurred by the school).

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that the Headteacher can offer financial assistance for some activities and visits where charges can legally be made. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below.

Parents/Carers in receipt of:

- Universal Credit or
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- 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 HM Revenue and Customs) does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Customs rules
- Guaranteed State Pension
- For parents/carers not in receipt of the above but requiring financial assistance, an application in writing can be made to the Headteacher

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- where possible the school will inform parents/carers in advance of visits (and their approximate cost) in plenty of time so that parents/carers can plan ahead
- a system for parents/carers to pay in instalments

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The FPP Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving a regular financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. Following the regular review of the above procedures, the school may decide to change elements contained within this policy. Parents/carers will be notified of any changes via the school newsletters, e-bulletin or web-site and a copy of the reviewed policy placed on the school website.

Refunds Policy

Payments for day trips and activities are non-refundable except under exceptional circumstances (ie. If a trip has to be cancelled or if the surplus exceeds the cost by an amount pre-determined by the governing body)

In the case of withdrawal from a residential trip by the parent/carer or by the school on behavioural or safety grounds, any non-refundable deposit will be retained. The return of other monies will depend upon a successful insurance claim (in the case of illness or injury) or on whether another student can be found to take their place. Refunds for any other reason are considered exceptional and are at the headteacher's discretion.

If the whole trip has to be cancelled the school will refund all money, except where deposits and/or non-refundable instalments have been paid by the school and cannot be redeemed from the third party.