



Charging and Remissions Policy

2023-24

Introduction

This policy has been drawn up regarding guidance published by the DfE and to fulfil Northleigh House School's duty under Section 457 of the Education Act 1996. The Trustees 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 Trustees also recognise the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards students' 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, this includes a carer.)

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 student's parent
- for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school
- for exam re-sits if the student 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 student's parent wish their child to own specific materials (e.g. 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or
 - c) part of religious education – exam entry fees if the registered student has not been prepared for the exam at the school – transport (other than that required to take the student 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 student's parents
- exam entry fees if a student 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. 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. The School Director or Trustees may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of

- a) any activity which takes place during school hours
- b) school equipment and

Parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits will be informed what 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. 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.

- If 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 School Director.

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

Review Date: September 2024