



**CHESTERTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Chesterton Community College
Charging and Remissions Policy**

May 2013

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

This document sets out Chesterton Community College's charging and remission policy for school activities and school visits. This is based on latest legislation (Education Act 1996) and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). Whilst there are many things that schools can and cannot charge for in law, we do occasionally request voluntary contributions to help sustain valuable learning experiences for our students.

Education

In line with legislation, we cannot charge for the following:

- an admission application to our school;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum¹, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at Chesterton, or part of religious education;
- tuition for students learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school².

We are allowed to charge for the following:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them or where we deem it necessary for the child to own them, for example calculators, revision booklets for mathematics which students complete with their own work, work booklets for foreign languages, again, where students complete with their own work, art equipment and cookery ingredients. We do not make any profit on these items, we charge parents what it costs the school. We benefit from bulk purchase discounts and reclaim VAT so are able to pass the net cost to the parents. We also ensure that any parent not able to afford these items receives financial assistance.

¹ It should be noted that 'part of the National Curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum 'inclusion statement' (e.g. developing teamwork skills).

² However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the student's parents.

- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 3).

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “optional extras”. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

Optional extras at Chesterton include:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the National Curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the student to school or to other premises where the governing body have arranged for the student to be provided with education; and
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit.

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

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual students is not meant to exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge will not include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges through voluntary contributions. Parental agreement is therefore sought as a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Residential Visits

We **cannot** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

We **can** charge for:

- board and lodging, however the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide students with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual student or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing.

Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s).

Transport

We do not charge for:

- transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport (for example transporting Cambourne students);
- transporting registered students to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and

Guidance on school travel is available [here](#)³.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require students to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1: Visit during school hours

Students are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

Students are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Voluntary Contributions and Remissions

Nothing in legislation prevents our governing body requesting **voluntary contributions** from parents and carers for the benefit of the school or any school activities. At Chesterton we believe that optional school activities provide invaluable learning experiences for students. Whilst there is clear guidance and legislation regarding the costs we can and cannot pass onto parents, we aim to be completely transparent in our activity costings.

In order to calculate the voluntary contributions required for our optional activities, our costings will be based on actual costs that will be incurred and these may include some or all of the following:

- transport
- board and lodgings
- activity costs
- insurance
- passport costs
- first aid / health and safety costs
- refreshments
- clothing / equipment
- entrance fees
- supply teacher costs, but only where the school has incurred supply costs as a result of the activity
- roundings (the cost of all trips under £50 will be rounded up to the nearest £1. The cost of all trips above £50 will be rounded up to the nearest £5. The cost of all trips over £200 will be rounded up to the nearest £10. This will reduce bureaucracy and any income that is generated but not used will be put into the hardship fund)
- hardship element for students who are eligible for Free School Meals, or whose parents are in receipt of Working Tax Credit or Income Support. These parents will be entitled to a reduction of 30% for all trips and activities. The school only has a very small hardship fund for those parents who are unable to financially contribute at all
- contingency

Our goal is that no student should be prevented from participating in educational activities, including trips, because they cannot afford it. However, the school cannot afford to heavily subsidise trips. When making requests for voluntary contributions, we do not wish for parents to feel pressurised into paying as we stress that contributions are voluntary and **not compulsory**. However, where insufficient voluntary contributions are made by parents to cover the cost of a chargeable activity, the activity is likely to be cancelled without their support.

When we inform parents about a forthcoming educational activity for which we will charge and seek voluntary contributions, we make it clear that we offer a 30% reduction for students who are eligible for Free School Meals and those parents who can prove they are in receipt of Working Tax Credit.

Whilst every effort is made to accurately cost trips and activities, costs can be affected by variables beyond our control. Should the actual cost per student be lower than anticipated, any overpayment of less than £5 will be automatically donated to the hardship fund, unless parents and carers request otherwise. This fund enables us to offer financial support for

students to participate in trips and activities which otherwise they may not be able to access. Should the overpayment be more than £5, parents and carers will be given the choice to reclaim the refund or donate to the hardship fund.

Approved by the Full Governing Body:

7th May 2013