

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Stroud High School is committed to the general principle of free education and recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including visits and residential experiences, can make towards all aspects of students' education. It also believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from School activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents' financial means.

Stroud High School 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 we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the academic year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

The 1996 Education Act requires all Academies and Schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for activities, which will be kept under regular review.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- Voluntary contributions may be requested
- Charges will be made
- Charges will not be made
- Charges may be waived

1. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Separately from the matter of charging, academies may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law states:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset
- No child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay
- If insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled
- If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit

2. CHARGES WILL BE MADE

Stroud High School reserves the right to make a charge for the following activities which may from time to time be organised by the School:

- Activities outside school hours - the School will endeavour to provide a range of such activities from time to time. These will sometimes include day and residential experiences, and are known generally as 'optional extras'. Charges may be made for these activities except where they are provided to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or are required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education in which case they are not regarded as optional extras as such and charges cannot be made. Board and lodging charges may still however be made for any Charging & Remissions Policy residential activities subject to the remission arrangements described below. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours
- Residential activities held during school hours - charges may be made for the board and lodging element of those residential activities during school hours. Parents will be notified in advance of any such activities which the School proposes to organise and the estimated cost. Parental consent will be obtained for their children's participation in any such activities for which a charge may be made. However, students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs
- Music tuition - music tuition for individuals or groups of up to 2 students
- Home to school student transport - costs incurred by the School in providing home to school transport for students who live outside of the School's designated catchment area
- Public Examinations – Where a parent asks for an examination result to be scrutinised, the charges made by the examination board for this service will be passed to the parents. Where the student has not been prepared by the school, the cost of entering the student will be passed to the parents. Where a student fails without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the school has paid, or is liable to pay, then the fee will be recovered from the parents. This will include situations where the student fails to complete the necessary coursework or fails to sit the final examination, but excludes justifiable or unavoidable absence, e.g. those supported by a medical certification.

Parents will be notified in advance of any 'optional extras' which the School proposes to organise and the estimated cost. Parental consent will be obtained if their children are to participate in any activities for which a charge may be made.

Any charge for a particular activity will be dependent upon the type of activity and its cost and the number of participants. This charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of students willing to participate. The cost of other students participating in the visit will not be included in the charge. The charge may however include an appropriate element for such things as:

- The student's travel costs
- The student's board and lodging costs
- Materials, books, instruments and other equipment
- Non-teaching staff costs
- Entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres, etc.
- Insurance costs

- The expenses only of participating teachers engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the 'optional extra'.

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip 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.

Where school property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a student, the School may charge those responsible for some or all the cost of repair or replacement. Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a student, and the School has been charged, the School may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible. The decision of whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher of the School concerned and dependent on the situation. This includes any damage or loss which may occur at:

- On school transport to and from school, or on a school-related activity
- Another venue whilst the students is on a school trip
- A work shadowing placement

3. CHARGES WILL NOT BE MADE

Charges will not be made for the following:

- An admission application
- 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 Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the School, or part of the School's basic curriculum for religious education
- Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) 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
- Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the School. However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, a charge will be made
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours, 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 the School's basic curriculum for religious education
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the School accompanying students on a residential trip
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

4. REMISSIONS

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, the School has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

Families will qualify for remission or help with charges if they are in receipt of:

- 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 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190
- Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- An income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit.

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances:

- Specific individual circumstances that have caused temporary hardship
- Recently moved into hardship but not yet receiving the benefits mentioned above
- Made a specific request to the Headteacher for any other justifiable reason. The remission is at the Headteacher's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided.