

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL



Charging and Remissions Policy

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

RESPONSIBLE PERSON - HEADTEACHER

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1. Background

The governing board of Riverside School recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards our pupils' education and experiences. The governing board aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

Riverside School believes that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) irrespective of their family's financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities are offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

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

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2024) 'Maintained schools governance guide'
- DfE (2024) 'What maintained schools must or should publish online'
- Education Act 1996
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Finance Policy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

- **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities.
- **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge, partly or wholly, which would normally be payable.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- the management of the school's delegated finances;
- ensuring the school acts in accordance with this policy at all times;
- ensuring money is spent for the educational benefit of pupils attending the school, and for the benefit of pupils in other schools; and
- recognising its legal requirements regarding charging for school activities under the Education Act 1996 and meeting all additional guidance provided by the DfE.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- prioritising and allocating financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds;
- informing parents/ carers on low incomes and in receipt of specific benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits; and
- liaising with parents and staff regarding any charges being applied and making decisions regarding appropriate remissions on a case-by-case basis.

The SBM/ finance team/ admin team will be responsible for:

- processing and recording payments for activities, taking into account any remissions applied; and
- ensuring that the correct invoices are sent to parents/ carers, and that payment is received.

5. Charges

The school may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school will make this clear to families at the outset. The school will make it clear to families that there will be no obligation for them to make any contribution; however, without the contribution the planned activity may not be able to go ahead. Families will be notified regarding whether assistance is available.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because their families are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent/ carer is unwilling/ unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity and the school will set out how places will be allocated from the outset. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled. This will be made clear to families.

The school will strive to ensure that families do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions. Measures which may make families feel pressured, such as colour coded

letters and direct debit or standing order mandates, will not be sent when the school requests contributions.

No charges will be made for:

- education provide during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the school's curriculum;
- entry for a prescribed public examination resit;
- admission applications;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parent/ carer;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; or
- examination results, if the pupil is being prepared for the results at the school.

The school reserves the right to charge for the following activities organised by the school:

- school journeys in school hours:
 - the board and lodging element of approved residential activities deemed to take place in school hours; and
 - the cost of meals, refreshments and entrance fees.
- contributions towards the cost of transport i.e., coach hire;
- Activities outside of school hours: the full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside of school hours;
- Instrument tuition: the cost of musical instrument tuition if provided at the parent/ carer's request;
- charging in kind: materials and ingredients for art and design, food, hospitality and catering, if the parent/ carer has indicated in advance that they wish to own the final product; and
- school property: the governors reserve the right to charge families for non-accidental damage to, or loss of school property.

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils.

Charges applied will not include an element of subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents/ carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a

willingness to meet the charges; therefore, parental/ carer agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents/ carers will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

6. General

The governing board may, from time-to-time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made. Nothing in this policy precludes the governing board from inviting families to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of additional activities which take place in school time. Families may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions, but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

7. Remissions

Where the family of a pupil are in receipt of Universal Credit or other government support, the governing board will offer to remit either partially or in full towards the cost of full board and lodging for any residential activity which is deemed to take place in school hours, or where it forms part of the syllabus for the school's curriculum.

The governing board may wish to remit either partially or in full the cost of other activities for particular groups of families, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity, such families will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges either partially or in full. Authorisation for such remission will be made by the headteacher in consultation with the chair of governors.

8. Freedom of Information & Publication Scheme

The school's Data Protection Policy sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the governing board and headteacher.