

THE BICESTER SCHOOL



Charging Policy

Date for Review: March 2019

Policy on charging and remissions for School activities

The Bicester School believes that:

All our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from School activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) 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 students 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 regular review.

1. The policy identifies activities for which:

- **voluntary contributions may be requested**
- **charges will be made**
- **charges will not be made.**
- **charges may be waived**

2. Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools 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. See example Appendix A.

3. No charges will be made for

- a) An admission application to any maintained school
- b) Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- c) 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;
- d) 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;
- e) Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school*;
- f) Examination re-sit(s)* if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school;

- g) Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours (see 4a);
- h) Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours (see 4a)
 - a. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - b. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or
 - c. part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- i) Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip;
- j) Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

* If a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge may / will be made.

4. Charges may be made for

a) Activities outside school hours

Residential and non-residential activities (other than those listed in Section 3 above) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours). (See Section 9)

b) Residential visits during school hours

The board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time, However students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or appropriate sized groups of students to play a musical instrument or to sing and which is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus for all students.

When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. This should recognise that parents may not be able to pay quickly and may have to budget for the trip over a reasonable period of time.

5. Optional Extras

Is a residential trip in or out of school time?

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.

Charges may be made for optional activities that are known as 'Optional Extras'. Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost (per student) of provision

It is the policy of The Bicester School that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them;	E.g. If the parents have indicated a wish to own the finished product or if the finished product is to be taken home or consumed by the student.
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual
Chares will/may be made for other curricular activities.	The cost, or a proportion of the cost may be charged as appropriate.
Deposits for examinations	In cases where the student's attendance at school has been unsatisfactory, or where teaching staff judge that they may not achieve a grade.
The cost of transport which is not provided by the LA school to travel direct from the students home to an activity sanctioned though not provided by the LA or the School	E.g. A journey directly from home to work experience.
Re-sits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the School.	Parents are reminded that an entry fee for a prescribed public examination will be recovered if the student fails to complete the examination without good reason. Students deciding to retake modules will need to pay in advance for the re-entry.

7. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges.

In order to remove financial barriers from students, the governing body 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 below sets out the circumstances in which such charges may be waived and contributions may be sourced from the Special purposes account.

There may be occasions where funds are available to help families who qualify under one of the following criteria. Please contact the office in confidence should you wish to discuss this further.

Category

Parents in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance

8. Is a school visit in or out of school time?

When any visit is arranged, parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. If the number of school sessions on a school 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.

9. Additional considerations

The governors recognize their 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 school 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.

**** For Teachers. Please refer to Trips and visits Guidance in the Staff shared area for further advice when organising a school trip. Guidance includes risk assessment, Trips and visits form, flow chart and insurance details. See Appendix 1 Trips and Visits form, Appendix 2 Teachers wanting to organise a trip and Appendix 3, copy of trip letter regarding voluntary contributions.*

10. Payment for damage to property

The Governors believe that students need to learn to be responsible for their actions. If their actions lead to damage of school property, or personal property belonging to another student, member of staff or visitor to the school, they will be expected to pay for the damage.

Parents are expected to explain to their children the importance of this policy and the inevitability of payment should damage be caused by deliberate intent, neglect, carelessness or the failure to obey instructions of a member of staff.

Replacement is usually an immediate priority for the School. Therefore the Governors will expect parents to pay the money owing immediately. The cost over a longer period of time would be expected, in most cases, to be borne by the student but the responsibility of removing pocket money or charging students from their part- time job remains that of parents.

The Governors reserve the right to refer matters to the police if appropriate. Should the Governors fail to receive money owed, they will consider other sanctions.

Parents and staff will need to make students aware of the importance of respect for property and of the real value which the community has contributed to equipping and maintaining its schools.