Charging and Remissions Policy

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Legal updates may precipitate changes

Introduction

This document sets out the Charging Policy of Ashley College and provides information to parents on the circumstances where the school would charge for activities, whether these are within school hours or out of school hours.

It also provides information on activities where no charge is made.

Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

Definitions

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

Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The management committee

The management committee has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The management committee also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

4.2 Headteachers

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently

- Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

Educational Visits and Extra-curricular activities

The Management committee will support off-site activities which the headteacher considers to be of good educational value and complementary to the curriculum.

Where costs are involved, parents could be asked to make a voluntary contribution for non-curricular elements.

Ashley College staff and transport costs will be met by school. If funds received are insufficient, the visit may be underwritten by the School, or cancelled, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Voluntary Contributions for Non Curriculum Activities

When organising school activities that are not part of the curriculum but enrich the educational experience of the children, the school will invite parents to contribute to the cost of the activity.

These contributions are necessary to fund the activity but are voluntary as the school cannot make contributions mandatory. The level of contribution is decided by the headteacher and is designed to cover the cost of the activity without affecting the schools budget allocation.

Staff costs will always be met by school as will vehicle costs.

There are circumstances where the school will contribute towards an activity, but if the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, the school may decide to cancel the activity. If the activity goes ahead, it will include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. In these circumstances the school would not treat these children differently from any others.

Residential Visits for Curriculum Activities

Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded and the school will provide this information on request.

If the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, no charge is made for the education element. A charge will, however, be made to cover the costs of board and lodging.

Activities which take place out of normal school hours, costs of hiring trained staff for specialist activities will be charged in addition to board and lodgings. Ashley College staff costs and vehicle costs will be met by school.

Sports activities

The school organises sporting activities for the pupils as part of the curriculum. These take place in school time and, and although they exceed the National Curriculum requirement, the school does not levy a charge to parents

Damages or Breakages
A pupil responsible for non-accidental damage to school property, such as books, equipment, windows etc, will render the parent liable for the cost of repair or replacement.

In cases of accidental damage to personal property within school an application should be made to the headteacher to cover full payment at his/her discretion or refer to the Chair of Management committee if the claim is considered to be excessive.

In any matter of dispute arising over interpretation, the Management Committee will be guided by the DfE and local authority regulations currently in use.

The school does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged articles of clothing or any personal possessions.

Charging and Remissions Policy

School meals

There is no charge for students having school meals, regardless as to whether or not students are entitled to free school meals.

Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school.

However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that pupil's parents.

There is no charge for examinations that are not on the set list, but have been arranged by the school.

There **is a charge** of the examination entry fee(s)+ admin costs if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school (**see Optional extras under section 4**)

Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours.

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

We may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras **(section 4)**
- music or vocal tuition **(section 7).**

Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum, *ie sports matches against other schools*
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is **not:**
    i. part of the National Curriculum

ii. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
iii. part of religious education

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or management committee has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

The cost of optional extras

The headteacher will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be set annually by the headteacher on the recommendation of the FPP committee. The charges, when determined, will be published on the school's website and appended to this policy.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge **(section 11)**.

When 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, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- 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.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Activities that take place *partly* during school hours either on or off site

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in **section 3.**

Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish

to participate. So no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a visit.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in **section 4.**

1. Residential activities

Our school will not 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

Our school will charge for:

Board and Lodging
When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not.

The charge will not exceed the actual cost. **Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost** (see **section 10**) for more guidance on remissions).

Travel
Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil. These charges may not apply to those pupils entitled to remissions, but no other pupils will be charged extra to cover those costs.

Activities
The school may charge for residential activities that fall **outside** of school hours **(see section 4)**.

2. Music tuition within school hours

Ashley College follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

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

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil 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. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. There may be a charge for instruments and books.

Ashley College is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils including access to specialised music tuition, therefore charges made for music tuition within school hours will be remitted for pupils on free school meals.

There is no charge for vocal or instrumental tuition for children in care. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

3. Extended services

Ashley College is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our students which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, *e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services)*
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

Ashley College provides – free of charge:

- Breakfast Club every morning from 8:30am – 9:20am
- Targeted revision classes
- Homework Club
- After school subject specific clubs

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others

4. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a student, or parent, the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the headteacher and dependent on the situation.

5. Remissions and Concessions

The school will give consideration to the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- 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
- [Universal Credit]

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The headteacher and chair of management committee will authorise the remission of charges.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the management committee and headteacher.

6. Voluntary contributions

The management committee may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

7. Inability or unwillingness to pay

Ashley College is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because their parents or carers

are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.