

Royal Alexandra & Albert School



Charging & Remissions Policy

Policy applies to	School
Governing Body approval required	Yes
Accountable Executive	Bursar
Status & Review Cycle	Statutory, annual
Last approval	GB 27.06.23

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies used for charging students at the Royal Alexandra and Albert School.

The School is required under section 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 to publish a charging and remissions policy. This policy is in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on charging for school activities (May 2018).

This policy is applicable to the school and not the charitable activities of the Royal Alexandra and Albert School charitable foundation.

1. Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to the School Finance and Resources committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The Governing Body also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

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

Staff are responsible for implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently, and for notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

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

3. Where charges cannot be made

The following cannot be charged for by the school:

Education

- Admission applications - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2021' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process
- 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 religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent
- 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

Transport

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for students to be educated
- Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

Residential visits

- 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
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying students on a residential visit

4. Where charges can be made

The following can be charged for by the school:

Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the student's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see below)
- Community facilities
- Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school and the student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus

Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school hours that is not part of the National Curriculum, nor part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, nor part of religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the student to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing board has arranged for the student to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to students (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

Any charge made in respect of individual students will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other students who wish to take part in the activity but 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 cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

Music and vocal tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of students, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made if the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum, or if the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme.

Charges cannot be made for a student who is looked after by a local authority.

5. Activities we charge for

In most cases, extra activities have to be self-financing on the basis of voluntary contributions from parents (see section 6 of this policy).

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge for the following items and activities:

- Visits, activities and trips meeting the criteria of 'optional extras' as defined by section 4: the basis for calculating the charge will be the proportionate cost where appropriate to each participating student for travel costs, board and lodging, materials, equipment, entrance fees, insurance, supervisory staff and administrative staff
- Board and lodging for residential visits meeting the criteria of section 3: charged at the actual cost of board and lodging
- Individual music tuition, where requested by the parent: fees are charged for instrumental lessons directly to parents by the visiting music tutors (payment should not be made to the school)
- Materials, books, instruments or equipment to be owned by the student, including items such as uniform, hoodies, revision materials, yearbooks, book bags, swimming hats, and maths equipment: charged at the full cost of the item
- Materials and ingredients used in lessons, provided the parents have indicated in advance that they wish their child to bring home the finished product: charged at the full cost of the

materials/ingredients. This will apply in particular to Food Technology, DT, Art, and Photography, but may also apply to other subjects.

- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school: charged at rates set by the relevant exam board
- Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school and the student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus: charged at rates set by the relevant exam board
- Review of marking for an examination paper, where requested by the parent: charged at rates set by the relevant exam board
- Breakages or damage to school premises and equipment as a result of student's behaviour or negligence: charged at the full replacement or repair cost
- Lockers: Lockers are available for rental to secondary school students at £30 for the duration of the student's time at the school. £5 is refundable on the return of the key. Replacement keys will be charged at £5.
- Non-return of school books (library or curriculum): lost books will be charged at the full replacement cost

6. Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 3 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities which would not otherwise be possible. Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities such as, swimming, special activities involving high cost materials, trips involving travelling to another venue or visitors to school who provide a service.

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no student will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

7. Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if 50% or more of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day. Conversely, if 50% or more of time spent falls outside of the normal school day, charges will be made. When such activities are arranged, parents will be told how the charges are calculated.

8. Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 4 and 5 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the headteacher and will depend on the activity in question. Parents will be informed that the headteacher can be consulted in complete confidence in cases of financial hardship.

Where the parents of a student are currently in receipt of free school meals, the full cost for board and lodging will be remitted for any residential visit that takes place:

- during school hours

- 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

9. Refund policy for chargeable visits, activities and trips

Refunds for underspend

The school budgets to breakeven on all trips. Should a trip make an unexpected surplus, the school will review whether a refund is due to parents. Refunds will be administered where the total surplus per student is the higher of:

- 5% of the per student fee charged for the trip
- £5 per student

Where the total surplus is per student is lower than this threshold, the administrative cost of individual refunds is considered higher than the remaining surplus, and the money will be treated as a donation to the school's voluntary fund.

Refunds for withdrawal or exclusion from a trip

Refunds will only be given where the school does not incur a loss as a result of the withdrawal or exclusion of the student from the trip.

It is sometimes possible to offer a refund if there is a waiting list for the trip and another student takes up the place. This cannot be guaranteed by the school.

The refund available will be calculated as the total fee charged for the trip, less all non-recoverable costs, less administration fees charged at the higher of:

- 5% of the fee charged for the trip
- £5

Where payments are due in instalments, and sufficient payment has not been made to cover non-recoverable costs resulting from withdrawal or exclusion, the parent will be required to make additional payment to the school to cover those costs.

For day trips/activities, no refund will be given where a student is withdrawn giving less than 7 days' notice before the trip/activity date.

For residential trips, the initial deposit is always non-refundable. Cancellation charges are usually set out by the tour company on a sliding scale of days before departure. Information about these charges can be made available on request.

The school reserves the right to exclude a student from a trip on the grounds of poor conduct or that their behaviour presents an unacceptable risk. The final decision on exclusion is made by the Educational Visits Coordinator.

Where a student is voluntarily withdrawn from school by the parent and taken off roll, the school will exclude the student from all trips from the date they are taken off roll.