

Charging & Remissions Policy

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Charging & Remissions Policy

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Charging & Remissions Policy

Introduction

Tandridge Learning Trust Schools may not:

- request any financial contributions as any part of the admissions process
- charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- charge for any education or activities 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 a religious education
- charge for instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent
- charge for entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at a school, or for an examination re-sit if the student is being prepared for the re-sit at a school

Tandridge Learning Trust Schools:

- must ensure that they inform parents/carers on low incomes and eligible for Free School Meals of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits
- may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions towards any part of a school's work;
- may charge for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside school hours, as long as these activities are optional extras;
- may charge for board and lodging on residential courses;
- may charge for materials, books, instruments or equipment where the student's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- may charge for certain Early Years provision
- may charge for the use of community facilities
- may charge for all aspects of education where we have been retained to provide an education service outside of our normal school premises.

Further detail is provided in sections 1 to 18 below.

Aims

Tandridge Learning Trust Schools aims to:

- provide a broad programme of trips and activities accessible to as many students as possible;
- establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the school budget.

Supporting Information

1. Education Provided during school hours

Education provided during school hours is free. This includes materials and equipment. 'School hours' are those when the school is actually in session, and do not include the break in the middle of the day.

2. Voluntary Contributions

Where the school cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to make these additional activities within the resources ordinarily available to the school, the school may request or invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the activity. Students will not be treated differently according to whether

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or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request or invitation. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, then it will be cancelled.

3. Activities taking place outside of school hours

- **Optional Activities** - Full cost for the activities which are deemed to be 'optional extras' can be made. Participation in optional extra activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges as are made. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras' and the school will decide the level of charge in such instances. Details of how the charge will be worked out will be provided for parents. The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity.
- **Essential Activities** - If the activity is deemed to be an essential part of the curriculum the school may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions. Should parents be unwilling or unable to contribute, letters of explanation addressed to the Headteacher will be considered and, where appropriate, remissions can be applied.

If a charge is made for each student, this will not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fundraising or Pupil Premium funding.

4. Education partly during school hours

If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge will be levied but parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The School cannot insist that parents pay the entire cost, nor can it prohibit any student from participating if their parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, but should there be insufficient voluntary contributions from parents, the activity may have to be cancelled.

Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours. For example:

- A long-distance trip involving much travel before and after normal school hours, but with time spent at the destination mainly within school hours, would count as happening in school time and voluntary contributions may be required.
- A trip leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but continuing until quite late in the evening, is classified as taking place outside school time and full charges may be made.

5. Board and Lodging on Residential Activities

Charges may be made for board and lodging whether or not the visit takes place within school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:

- the syllabus of a prescribed public examination
- the National Curriculum
- the statutory duties relating to religious education

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Schools can charge for board & lodgings and the charge must not exceed the actual cost (but these costs can include appropriate admin & other directly related overheads).

Schools must remit any charges for board and lodging in the case of students eligible for Free School meals and where the activity is deemed to take place in school hours, or if it is out of hours but covered by the above criteria.

The Headteacher must tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

6. Terms and Conditions for Planned Activities

When parents are informed of a planned activity the information letter will include a reply slip. The student will not be considered for the activity until and unless a signed positive application is received by the school.

The information letter will also include a deadline by when the reply should be received by the school. In the event that the activity is oversubscribed (and the school is unable to increase the number of participants) the following criteria will be used, to select successful applicants:

- The initial allocation will be on a first-come-first-served basis providing the payment required is attached to the application or e-payment has been made.
- The remaining unsuccessful students who had payment attached to their application will be placed on a reserve list and numbered in order of receipt

Electronic payments are made on-line via the school's payment portal (Arbor payments).. Where cheque payments are accepted, they should be made payable to Tandridge Learning Trust. Where cash is accepted, receipts are given by the school office but students should not bring large amounts of cash into the school. It is the preference of the Trust for all activities to be paid for on-line.

- The school's acceptance of a positive reply constitutes a contract with the parents and any unpaid contribution will remain a debt to the school and collection will be enforced.
- Deposits are not refundable unless a replacement student is available.
- Returned contributions, for whatever reason, will be entirely at the discretion of the school and the amount will depend on whether the school's cost in providing the activity is covered.
- The planned activity may be cancelled if the estimated number of applications is not received.

7. Public Examinations

No charges will be made for entering students for public examinations that are set out in regulations. The school will enter a student for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the school has prepared the student, unless it thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or if the student's parents/carers ask in writing that the student should not be entered.

An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the student was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the student to take it;
- a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school or LA originally paid, or agreed to pay, the entry fee;
- a student subsequently retakes an examination and is not prepared for this retake at the school.

Charges will not be made for any cost associated with preparing a student for an examination.

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Charging is, however, allowed for tuition and other costs if a student is prepared outside school hours, for example Easter revision classes.

8. School Transport & Minibuses

Only the school's students, staff or parents may travel at a charge in the school's minibus.

The school may charge for transport in its minibuses only if it holds a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. The permit exempts the school from Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator and driver licensing requirements. A permit is not required if no charge is made.

The school may not raise funds to make a profit by charging for travel in its minibuses.

Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running the vehicle, including loss of value, but the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit-making activity, even if any profit would go into the school's other running costs or for charitable purposes. A charge is any payment made in cash or kind (e.g., a club subscription) by or on behalf of a person which gives him or her a right to be carried.

9. School Materials & Textbooks

The school provides materials and textbooks but reserves the right to charge, at cost, for lost or damaged books or IT equipment. Additional materials are provided for optional purchase at cost in some subjects e.g. calculators in Mathematics and materials in practical subjects are chargeable if students or parents wish to own the finished product. Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not materials are being provided by their parents. Additional books that students wish to keep e.g. for revision, may be bought in bulk and sold to students who wish to buy them at cost price.

10. Damage/Loss to Property

A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment (including IT equipment), books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the School. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Head of School may decide.

11. Admissions

No charge will be made for admission applications to schools within Tandridge Learning Trust Schools. Requests for financial contributions as part of the admissions process will not be made.

12. Other Charges

The Headteacher may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services, e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

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Participation in optional extra activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges as are made. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras' and the Trust Board will decide the level of charge in such instances.

If an activity is deemed to be an essential part of the curriculum and parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, letters of explanation addressed to the Headteacher in confidence will be considered and, where appropriate, remissions can be applied. However, it is the responsibility of parents to claim such remission of charges on an activity-by-activity basis.

Remission of charges will be considered for students who are eligible for Free School Meals.

If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fundraising.

14. Activity Deficit/Surpluses/Remission Account

The costing of activities will be undertaken with care, but as money needs to be collected in advance the costs will be estimates.

Estimates will result in some activities making a deficit (unexpected late charges) but in the main activities will break even or make a small surplus. In those circumstances the surplus will be set against any school contributions for students and any deficits incurred on activities. Should a trip result in a large surplus, refunds will be made to parents who made voluntary contributions. Any year-end balance will be retained within school funds for the benefit of all students at the school.

15. Insurance

Insurance cover for trips and off-site activities within the UK is arranged by the school with the Risk Protection Agreement scheme provided by the Department for Education. No charge for insurance cover is made to parents when calculating charges for activities which are covered by this policy. Insurance for trips overseas will be arranged by the school and the cost of such insurance is factored into the charge for the trip. Full policy details are available on request from the school.

16. VAT

The regulations governing VAT are complex. To keep matters simple, as a general rule VAT is not recoverable on school trips which are paid for by parents but is recoverable when it is paid for out of the school budget.

17. Lettings

The Trustees recognise that the school is fully occupied during school hours, however, the Headteacher can authorise additional evening, weekend and school holiday lettings if accommodation can be made available. Each school will agree annually a schedule of charges for the use of all facilities by external bodies which must, as a minimum, cover all actual costs. The school cannot use DfE funding to subsidise the cost of use by organisations other than other Tandridge Learning Trust schools.

All lettings are subject to the School's Terms and Conditions of Hire and must be signed by hirers to indicate agreement before the letting takes place. VAT will be charged on some lettings in accordance with HMRC VAT Regulations.

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The Trust Board reserves the right to decline any lettings that are not deemed to be in sympathy with the school's ethos.