

The Blandford School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Please note that, while the DfE's 'Charging for school activities' guidance is advisory, all schools are required to have a Charging and Remissions Policy, in accordance with the DfE's 'Statutory policies for schools and academy trusts'.

Policy Status/Review Programme	Annual
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Responsible Person	Office Manager
Responsible Governor Committee	Resources

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Statement of intent

The Blandford School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions towards the costs of school visits.

Please note that while this policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2024) 'Governance handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

2. Charging for education

The school will not charge for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours.
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the school, or part of RE.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless 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.
- Where a student wishes to re-sit an examination outside the normal assessment timings of the course, they will be expected to pay for the entry. The school may, in certain circumstances, be able to provide financial assistance for this.

The school may charge for:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes their child to own them.
- Optional extras.
- Music tuition (in certain circumstances).
- Use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

The school will make it clear that, in the following circumstances, it will propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to the school:

3. Optional extras

The school may charge for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school
 - Part of RE
- Examination entry fees where the student has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that required to take the student to school or to other premises where the LA 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, e.g. breakfast or out-of-school provision

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- Buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff (including TAs)
- Teaching staff under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating students. A subsidy will not be charged for any students wishing to participate 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 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 students 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 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 will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

4. Examination fees and resits

The school may charge for examination fees 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 arranged for the student to take it.
- A student fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing board or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

- Where a student wishes to re-sit an examination outside the normal assessment timings of the course, they will be expected to pay for the entry. The school may, in certain circumstances, be able to provide financial assistance for this.

If a student or their parent consider it to be in the best interests of the student to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the student or their parent. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent or student will have their fees refunded.

5. Voluntary contributions

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 parents at the outset. There is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and parents will be notified regarding whether assistance is available.

No student will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

The school will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

6. Music tuition

Instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size – provided that the tuition is at the request of the student's parents. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Charging will not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum.

No charge will be made in respect of students who are Children In Care

7. Transport

The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for students to be educated.
- Transporting students to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided for an educational visit.

8. Education partly during school hours

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

Whatever the start and finish times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and the school may charge for the activity; however, the school will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.

The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by the school.

Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

9. Residential visits

The 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, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying students on visits.

Pupil Premium and Bursary students will be supported in line with the Educational Visits Policy

10. Damaged or lost items

The school may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of students or their parents. Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The school will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances, e.g. financial hardship.

11. Remissions

The school has set aside a fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Pupil Premium and Bursary students will be supported in line with the Pupil Premium Policy.

To request assistance, parents should contact the Student Achievement Champion.

12. School trip refunds

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded in full. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a student or their parents cancel the student's place on a trip, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the student's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another student.

Where a student or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the student to attend future trips and visits.

In the event that a student cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the student's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another student.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £10.00 per student.. Any balances below these amounts will be retained by the school and used to support the cost of school activities for students who may otherwise not be able to participate.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all students and their families are treated equally.

13. School Meal Balance Refund

For unused balances in respect of school meals, refunds of less than the free school meal allowance will not be made. Any balances below these amounts will be retained by the school and used to support the cost of school activities for students who may otherwise not be able to participate.

14. Complaints About Refunds

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

15. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

16. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Office Manager, and by Governors on any change.