



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Statement of intent

Westhoughton High School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all learners, 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.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- 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 (2020) 'Governance handbook'

2. Charging for education

2.1. We will not charge parents for:

- Admission applications.
- 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, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the learner is being prepared for by the school, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for learners learning individually or in groups unless provided at the request of the learner's parents.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the learner has been prepared for it at the school.
- Examination re-sits, if the learner is being prepared for the re-sits at the school.

2.2. We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them
- Optional extras
- Music and vocational tuition (in certain circumstances)
- The use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

3. Optional extras

3.1. We may charge parents 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 learner is being prepared for at the school.
 - Part of Religious education.
- Examination entry fees where the learner has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that required to take the learner to school or to other premises where the LA has arranged for the learner to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a learner on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to learners

3.2. When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- The employment of non-teaching staff
- The cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) 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

3.3. The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating learners. We will not charge a subsidy for any learners wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, we will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

- 3.4. The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying learners on a residential visit.
- 3.5. 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 pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

4. Examination fees and re-sits

- 4.1. We may charge for examination fees if:
 - The examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A levels), but the learner was not prepared for it at the school.
 - The examination is not on the prescribed list, but the school arranged for the learner to take it.
 - A learner 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 fee.
- 4.2. Where a learner is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, we will pay the fee. Once learners have left the school, re-sits must be taken at the school.
- 4.2. If a learner or their parents consider it to be in the best interests of the learner to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the learner or their parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent/learner will have their fees refunded.

5. Voluntary contributions

- 5.1. We 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, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.
- 5.2. No child 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 and this will be made clear to parents.
- 5.3. We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions. Measures which may make parents feel pressured, such as colour coded letters and direct debit or standing order mandates, will not be sent when the school requests contributions.

6. School trips

- 6.1. Advice for staff regarding collection of funds and trip financial management can be found on the Evolve system.
- 6.2. The information includes a pro forma which has to be completed by all trip organisers, indicating planned costs and an assessment of how planned charges per learners have been calculated.
- 6.3. Profit should not be made from trips.
If a residential trip is organised during school time charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances but exceptions do apply for learners whose parents are receiving:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)
- 6.4. As eligibility will vary, trip organisers should generally be mindful of a learner's ability to pay and be sensitive in requests to learners entitled to a free school meal who may be exempt from charges for residential courses.
- 6.5. Letters are sent to parents requesting payment for voluntary contributions from trip organisers
- 6.6. Letters sent to parents encourage payment by Parent Pay.
- 6.7. All monies received for trips are paid into the school's bank account by the finance office staff after receipt onto the School Fund system.
- 6.8. The Finance Team are responsible for keeping adequate records of income and expenditure on a class list and will require details from trip organisers to support this function.
- 6.9. All relevant receipts for income or spend should be passed to the finance office.
- 6.10. The Finance Team prepares a final income and expenditure account for each trip which has taken place.

7. Music tuition

- 7.1. Music tuition is the only 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 learner's parents.
- 7.2. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.
- 7.3. Music Lessons arranged on behalf of learners with Bolton Music Service will be subject to a charge. Levels of annual charges applied to lessons will be agreed jointly by school and the Music Service. Terms will be agreed with parents by receiving a signed contractual arrangement from each parent/guardian. Parents will be requested to submit payment as agreed independently with Bolton Music Service. Charges and terms and conditions will be reviewed annually in line with SLA arrangements by school governors. Review of charges will include an assessment of an agreed annual subsidy and payment for lessons taken by learners entitled to a FSM.

8. Transport

- 8.1. We will not charge for:
 - Transporting registered learners to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
 - Transporting registered learners to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for learners to be educated.
 - Transporting learners to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
 - Transport provided for an educational visit.

9. Residential visits

- 9.1. We 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 learner is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
 - Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying learners on visits.
- 9.2. We may charge for board and lodging – but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

- 9.3. Parents will be exempt from board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:
- Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)
- 9.4 The school will provide a form for parents to submit and provide proof of receipt of one of the above benefit payments in order to be eligible for the exemption.
- 9.5 If the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, the school will not charge for the activity.

10. Education partly during school hours

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. 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 we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the learner is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- 10.3. **Residential visits:** If the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, we will not charge for the activity.
- 10.4. The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by our contingency funds.

11. Damaged or lost items

- 11.1. The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour. Parents will not be taken to court for failure to pay such costs.
- 11.2. The school will take steps to recover from learners costs associated with any acts of wilful damage or vandalism. Each incident will be assessed by school staff with the final decision lying with the Headteacher.

12. Remissions

- 12.1. We have set aside a small fund to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/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/activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip/activity will be cancelled.
- 12.2. Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
 - Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)
- 12.3. To request assistance, parents should contact the school.

13. School trip refunds

- 13.1. 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.
- 13.2. In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded.
- 13.3. In the event that a school trip is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.

- 13.4. In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The headteacher will discuss options with the governing board, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.
- 13.5. In the event that a learner or their parents cancel their place on a trip, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the learner's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another learner.
- 13.6. Where a learner 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 learner to attend future trips and visits.
- 13.7. In the event that a learner cannot attend a trip at the last minute (e.g. due to illness), it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the learner's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another learner.
- 13.8. 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 per learner. If the excess is less than £10 per learner, this will be paid into the school's account.
- 13.9. Excess expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.
- 13.10. The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all learners and their families are treated equally.
- 13.11. If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

14. Publication Scheme

The school's Publication Scheme will set out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

15. Monitoring and review

- 15.1. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the governing body

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher

Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors

Date: _____