

HELSEBY HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY ON CHARGING AND REMISSIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Purpose and Aim

Helsby High School believes that learning outside the classroom makes an invaluable contribution to the education of young people. It follows therefore that all students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will support families overcome some of the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the full range of educational opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities.

This policy identifies activities for which:

- charges will not be made
- charges may/will be made
- charges may be waived

Voluntary contributions guidance

The law allows schools to seek voluntary contributions from parents to finance activities that are not part of the National Curriculum or external examination syllabus. All requests for voluntary contributions from parents and carers must emphasise their voluntary nature. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled and the parents must be notified of this from the outset. No child can be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay. The charges for a visit cannot include a subsidy for any other students whose parents are unable or unwilling to pay the full charge. Staff should use the framework of the school's model letter to make this clear to parents.

1 No charges will be made for:

- a. Education provided during school hours
- b. 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 the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- c. Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as 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
- d. Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school*
- e. Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school*
- f. Education (including books and materials) provided on any trip that takes place during school hours
- g. Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip

* If a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

2 Activities for which charges may be made

a. Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 1 above) which take place outside school hours but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

b. Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However, students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions section below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs. Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time provided as an optional extra (other than for those activities listed in 1 above).

c. Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or small groups.

d. Public Examinations

The Headteacher has the delegated responsibility to decide whether students are entered into particular examinations and is authorised to request payment for wasted examination fees.

e. Loss and Damage to School Property

Parents of a student who damages or loses any item of school property or equipment are liable for the costs of repair or replacement.

3 Residential Visits

Residential trips that take place mostly in school time must request voluntary contributions from parents as schools are not allowed to charge for them. When any trip is arranged parents must be notified of the policy for allocating places and staff must not use 'first come first served' as the process can disadvantage certain students.

4 It is the policy of the School that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below.

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as 'optional extras'. Charges will not exceed the actual cost (per student) of provision. Charges will/may be made for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them
- music tuition to cover the cost, or a proportion of the costs of teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual student or a small group.
- for the board and lodging component of residential trips (the charge will not exceed the actual cost)
- missed public examinations
- loss and damage to school property

5 Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits, where charges can legally be made, will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges.

Criteria for qualification for remission are given below.

Parents in receipt of;

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £15,575
- Guaranteed State Pension
- an income related employment and support allowance

these criteria usually relate to the family being eligible for free school meals.

6. Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end the school's processes will operate to the following guidelines:

- to offer on request a system for parents to pay in instalments
- to offer on request to arrange, when a trip arises at short notice, to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- to recognise that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and avoid that method of selection