

Charges and Remissions Policy

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Set out the school's approach to charging parents or carers for activities, including circumstances in which the school may request a voluntary contribution.
- Clarify how charges will be determined, so parents and carers understand why requests for payment are sometimes made for some activities.

1. Introduction

Steiner Academy Bristol is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:

- participate fully in the school's curriculum;
- contribute to all aspects of school life;
- be a valued partner in the process of education

We recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. We will provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means.

2. Education During School Hours

The general principle is that education provided should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours. School hours are the hours when a school is in session and does not include the lunch break. This means that neither the pupil nor his or her parents or guardians may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours. The main exception to this is that the law allows a charge to be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if the tuition takes place during school hours.

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

3. Residential Activity

A fee will be charged for transport costs to and from the venue and for the board and lodging element of residential activities deemed to take place within school hours e.g. school camps or extended visits outside Fishponds. Parents/guardians/carers can make payments in advance by instalment. No charge is made to cover any additional costs incurred by the school. The school aims to reduce the cost of residential visits wherever possible.

In exceptional circumstances the school may make the decision to support a pupil's attendance on a residential trip.

4. Music tuition within school hours

SAB follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, one to one or small group music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

5. Extended services

SAB is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our students which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services)
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

Where an activity is arranged outside the normal school hours the full cost of the activity will be charged to each pupil. Such activities may include attending the Colston Hall, theatre visits etc. Charges for these activities such as homework or afterschool clubs will cover the cost of any staff engaged to run the activity.

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

6. School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per term decided by the governing body of SAB

7. Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school.

There is a charge of the examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school (see Optional extras under section 5)

8. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a student or parent, SAB reserves the right to charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school reserves the right to charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Principal and dependent on the situation.

9. Visits during school time

Staff will be asked to identify a year plan of any trips and visits that may cost money at the start of each academic year. The school and parents have limited funds to support extra trips and with this in mind the outline costs for trips will be assessed by the SLT before any plans are made. **Approval must be given by the Principal before communicating the plans.** If parents will need to contribute an unreasonable sum of money to support a trip or visit the plans will be adapted to reduce the costs.

Where a visit takes place during school time parents or guardians may be asked for a voluntary contribution towards the cost. These visits will be planned well in advance of the date so that parents can be asked if they are willing to contribute. However, the school cannot proceed with an activity unless there is sufficient money to cover the costs involved. No child will be treated differently if voluntary contributions are not made.

The Governing Body has left to the discretion of the Principal the proportion of the costs of an activity, which can be properly charged to public or non-public funds. A charge of 5% may be added to cover telephone and postage costs. The cost of adult supervision by school staff will be not be included in the requested amount.

Where it is deemed that insufficient voluntary contributions have been received the Principal will cancel the proposed trip and inform parents and guardians, returning funds already received.

10. Voluntary Contributions

When additional costs are incurred by the Academy to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. If insufficient voluntary contributions are received the school reserves the right to cancel the event.

However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because their parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made. Activities which may incur additional cost are:

- Educational visits off site
- Visits to school by professionals e.g. authors, storytellers, musicians, artists etc.

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

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- non-teaching staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra

- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Whilst the school wishes to provide the best possible education opportunities available within the funds allocated by the DfE, funds will not allow for every activity we offer. Therefore there will be times when parents and guardians are asked to contribute towards the cost.

The restrictions on charging for school activities are not intended to prohibit or restrict the school from seeking voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any school activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential. However, such contributions must be genuinely voluntary.

The terms of any request for contributions will make it clear that there is no obligation to contribute and that registered pupils at SAB will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.

If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contribution, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. At the same time it will be made equally clear that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it.

11. Remissions Policy

To ensure that access to activities reflects intentions, our School will implement the following Remissions Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties, which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

The school will give consideration to the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- [Universal Credit]

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The Principal and chair of the Finance & Resources Committee will authorise the remission of charges.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the governing body and Principal.

Families who approach the Principal for support, are looked on favourably and personal circumstances are taken into account. Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified under any circumstances. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals. The school will therefore use systems for collecting charges directly from parents so that those paying reduced rates are not identified.

The school community is encouraged to participate in fund raising efforts and to make a contribution towards the school's funds (e.g. Winter Fair).

12. Informing Parents/carers

Steiner Academy Bristol will follow the DfE Guidelines to inform parents of prospective charges and a summary of this will be included in the school prospectus. A letter will be sent to parents giving them information about any proposed visit/activity which includes:-

- Details of the visit/activity
- Dates and times
- Expected dress code
- Proposed voluntary contribution (if applicable)
- Return slip to include a parental signature agreeing to the child taking part, contact and medical details (as appropriate)

Any charge that is made for each pupil will not exceed the actual cost.

13. Implementation

As a part of the process of budget building, planning is essential to developing a charging policy at the School which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the school.

Members of staff arranging such activities will consider:

- the projected total number of children
- cost per head
- breakdown of transportation costs
- entry fees
- discounts
- teacher costs

Such a process, however, should not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the school to take advantage of opportunities that arise during the course of the year. These will be implemented in a way which is consistent with the school's overall policy.

Photocopying

Any photocopying that is requested by parents relating to their child, under the 'Freedom of Information Act', will be charged at **10p per sheet**.

Private fees

Any report or data that is requested on a child for the purpose of a third party private assessment requested by a parent (e.g. private psychologist reports or solicitor reports) will be charged at an agreed rate by the Principal in discussion with the Chair or Vice-chair of Governors. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information (not less than £10 per hour) as well as photocopying charges (not less than 10p per sheet) and postage.

14. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Finance & Resources Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a yearly basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support.

Document Control

Linked Policies	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/2255/contents/made
------------------------	---

Designated Governor (role)	Finance Governor – Anna Mapson
Designated Staff member	Joss Hayes
Governor committee	Finance & Resources Committee
Date approved by Governors	April 2018
Review date	April 2020