

Charging and Remissions Policy

Policy Number: STAT023

Trustee Committee: Resources

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Issue Date: 2nd July 2024

Review Date: 2nd July 2025

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Board of Trustees no less than annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees on 02nd July 2024
It is due for review in 12 months from the above date.

Signature _____

Date _____

Headteacher

Signature _____

Date _____

Chair of Board of Trustees

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Statement of intent

Hitchin Boys' 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:

- No compulsory charge will be made for any curriculum-related activity where more than 50% of the time for that activity is within normal school hours nor will any charge be made for any essential materials or equipment used as part of the normal school curriculum. Individual music tuition is an exception to this.
- 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.

We have ensured that this policy meets the requirements of the law prevailing at the time of publication.

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
- 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'
- Gov.UK (2024) Academy Trust Governance Guide
- The trust's Funding Agreement
- ESFA (2023) 'Academy trust handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Debt Recovery Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- The school's Scheme of Delegation
- Finance Manual

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
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school.

The school may charge for:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes their child to own them.
- Residential accommodation (i.e. board and lodging costs). Residential field courses are not an essential requirement of any examination syllabus. Parents will be asked to pay the cost.
- Individual, group, shared music tuition will be charged for. However, those studying G.C.S.E and 'A' level Music – 50% discount (30 minutes G.C.S.E, 1 hour 'A' level).
- Non-prescribed examinations (e.g. music examinations).
- More than one entry in the same subject at the same sitting for approved public examinations.
- Re-sitting a subject.
- Examination entry in a subject for which the student has not received preparation in school.
- Scrutiny of public examination results at the request of the parent/student. Exam boards will charge for reviews of marking.
- Loss of or damage to school property (e.g. damaged books, broken windows, etc.).
- The use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.
- Provision of a personalised learning device that will become the property of a student e.g. a Chromebook. Specific arrangements have been made for this scheme to ensure that eligible parents receive financial support for Chromebook scheme costs, or can borrow a Chromebook to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by this scheme.
- Optional Extras (see below)

Voluntary contributions – parents can be asked to make a voluntary contribution for

- Travel costs and tuition costs for any activity or visit.
- Material costs for any activity – a general contribution could be requested to support funding the cost of design & technology projects, for example, and the actual cost charged if parents wish to retain the finished product.

No student will be disadvantaged because of lack of voluntary contribution but the school reserves the right to determine which projects will be undertaken by groups of students.

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
- Examination entry fees where the student has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the trust board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education
- 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 costs where teaching staff are engaged under a separate contract for that particular activity or visit;

Voluntary contributions may be requested for optional extras. These costs may include the travel expenses of accompanying teachers. The school will aim only to cover costs but is not obliged to refund any surplus above actual costs. It may do so if it wishes; otherwise any surpluses which may arise will be applied to the School General Account to assist with other activities.

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 (which includes GCSEs and A-levels), 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 paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Where a student is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the parent/student will pay the fee (although there may be remission on this for eligible families as per below). Once students have left the school, resits must be taken at the school.

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 contribute 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. The school's arrangements with the Herts Music Service and peripatetic teachers are detailed in information supplied to parents on transition to secondary school and on request from the Music department.

Charges will not be made for instrumental or vocal tuition during music lessons delivered as part of the normal timetabled curriculum.

7. Transport

The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils 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 will be 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 will 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 will be 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 pupil 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.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying students on visits.

The school may charge for transport, board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents will be exempt from transport, 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 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)

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 need's 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.

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)

Trustees agree that the school will subsidise, from their delegated budget grants from the Government, field courses in Geography and Biology. Parents in receipt of family benefits will not be expected to pay residential costs in the above cases where help is requested.

In order to make sure that limited funding benefits the largest number of students, priority is given to these curricular trips.

HBS also runs trips that are for enrichment and recreation such as ski trips, sports tours and cultural enrichment trips to destinations such as Costa Rica, Iceland, China

etc. Funding will be provided for a maximum of **one** of these significant foreign trips during the student's time at HBS for those in receipt of benefits and who request assistance. The school also supports activities similar to 'World Challenge' where an extended period of time is spent abroad on volunteering and personal development activities. It is expected that students fundraise and gain sponsorship to access these trips, as this is outside the scope of what the school will provide remission for.

The school will continue to assist parents by making applications for funds where appropriate to the Hitchin Educational Foundation.

Application for assistance should be made to the School Business Manager.

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 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 completed trip, a refund will be given as follows:

- a) If the surplus is greater than 5% of the contribution per head, subject to a minimum of £5, then a refund of the full amount of the surplus will be offered to parents (minus a charge to cover admin and fees charged by our payment processor).
- b) If the surplus is less than 5% of the contribution per head or less than £5, the surplus will be placed in the School Fund.

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

We would ask parents to appreciate that the timing of refunds is often dictated by travel companies, airlines, coach companies etc. In many cases, parental payments for trips are passed through to the travel operators, meaning that refunds can only be given once agreed with the operator and the funds have been returned to the school. The timing of this is often outside the school's control.

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

13. Income generation

In line with the ESFA's '[Academy trust handbook](#)', the trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

14. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

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