

CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

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Reviewed: November 2020

To be reviewed: Every 3 years, unless legal requirements change.

Other Sources of Information

Published by schools within the Trust:

- Free School Meals & Pupil Premium Procedures (available from school websites)
- Information available from School Finance Offices

1. INTRODUCTION

The Girls' Learning Trust (the 'Trust') is required through its funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities. In establishing a Charges & Remissions Policy, the Trust has adopted the latest applicable guidance from the Department for Education's [Charging for School Activities](#) (see hyperlink¹, updated May 2018) and this may be referred to for further information.

This Policy reinforces the principle of free education provided during school hours, whilst setting out those events and activities for which a charge may be made or a voluntary contribution requested, and those circumstances in which charges may be remitted.

This Policy is applicable to all schools in the Girls' Learning Trust. Where specific arrangements are in place in a school, additional procedures and guidance notes have been published by the school and are available from the school websites. In all cases, arrangements have been put in place to assist parents/carers on low incomes, and details are provided in Section 3.

2. CHARGES

2.1 Enrichment Activities

The Trust is proactive in developing an extensive programme of enrichment activities for students in each school. This kind of activity is referred to as an 'optional extra'. The programme is designed and implemented by each school.

There will be some trips or activities which the school cannot charge for, but which the school considers would be beneficial to students. In this case, the school may ask for voluntary contributions. No student will be excluded from the activity or treated differently because they do not make a contribution. If voluntary contributions are not sufficient then it may be that the planned activity or trip cannot go ahead.

This includes 'Enrichment Days' (in schools where trips and events are run in this format), as well as other activities throughout the year. The schools cannot fund these activities without voluntary contributions.

Voluntary contributions will not subsidise any other student participating, and thus, at the discretion of the school, there may be times when arrangements have to be cancelled if insufficient funds are raised.

Charges may be made for optional activities provided or co-ordinated wholly or mainly out of school hours.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>

2.2. Examination Fees

No charge will be made for a student's first entry to a prescribed public examination that is part of the curriculum and on the school's set examination list, and for which the student has been prepared at school.

A charge will, however, be made for:

- a) Re-sit examinations (unless the student is being prepared for the re-sits by the school or other DfE guidance prevails (such as COVID related exceptions));
- b) Re-marks and clerical checks requested by students and parents/carers (including feedback on Admissions Test Papers);
- c) Requests for scripts;
- d) An examination for which the student has not been prepared by the school (this will include additional languages such as Chinese, Gujarati, etc, and other examinations not taught by the school such as Religious Studies Other Religions);
- e) An examination required as part of a university entrance test (such as the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) and/or the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCat));
- f) Where a student fails without good reason (in the judgement of the Headteacher) to meet the requirement of any public examination, e.g. by non-attendance, and where the school originally paid the entry fee;
- g) Where, without good reason, a student's attendance on the course falls below 90%.

The charge will comprise the fee levied by the Examinations Board, plus an administration fee to be retained by the school.

2.3 Music Tuition

Charges will not be made for class musical tuition during school hours or out-of-school hours where it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required as part of the national curriculum. In the exceptional circumstances where a student requires tuition to enable study for a public examination offered by the school, music lessons will be provided by a teacher of the school's choice to the required standard.

However, it is the Trust's policy to promote musical tuition and it offers practice rooms in each school to facilitate individual and group tuition. Thus, at the request of a student's parent/carer, a student may receive tuition in a musical instrument or vocal tuition, either individually or in groups, and in this situation a charge will be made by the third party instructor. This is the subject of a contract between the parents/carers and the peripatetic music instructor and there is no supervisory involvement or quality assurance by the Trust or the individual school. Where a charge is made for musical instrument tuition or vocal tuition, the parent/carer will be invoiced directly by the third party instructor and the 'contract' will be between the peripatetic music instructor and the parent/carer.

2.4 Curriculum Resources and Materials

Education provided during school hours is free of charge.

No charge will be made for books, materials or equipment deemed necessary to meet the requirements of the school curriculum, including text books, revision guides, test papers, and the like, used to support teaching of the subject. Provision may be made electronically via the school's virtual learning environment.

However, it is the Trust's policy that, in some cases, voluntary contributions may be requested for optional extras (such as printed photocopies), provided always that, provision is available to all students to meet the needs of the school curriculum, including those students whose parents are unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution.

The Trust/school may also make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology, where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

2.5 Printing & Photocopying

In view of the environmental and financial implications of unlimited access to computer printing and photocopying facilities, it is the Trust's policy that students will be given a limited free allocation of printing. Students will be charged if they exceed their allocation.

Details of costs and arrangements are published by each school and are available on the school's website or by contacting the School Office.

2.6 Computers & Tablets

The Trust/school is prohibited from charging for education and the supply of materials, books, instruments or other equipment (this would include tablets), during school hours. However, there is no prohibition on asking parents to make voluntary contributions. Additionally there is a specific exception in the legislation which enables schools to charge for materials where the student's parent wishes them to own the materials.

All contribution requests to parents/carers must make clear that the contributions to a Trust/school organised IT scheme are voluntary (for example, where the Trust/school is proposing to charge for the provision of laptops/tablets) and that, if a parent cannot make or refuses to make a contribution, their children will not be treated any differently and will not be excluded from taking part in any activity or related equipment.

The Trust/school may encourage parents/carers to independently purchase computers & tablets for use in supporting teaching & learning at home, provided always that provision is available to all students to meet the needs of the school curriculum, including those students whose parents are unwilling or unable to provide this support.

2.7 Loss or Damage to Property

It is the Trust's policy that loss of, damage to or breakage of school property, e.g. books, windows, furniture, scientific equipment etc., will be charged for if caused by negligence or deliberate act. The charge will be the cost of a replacement or repair, at the discretion of the Headteacher. Similarly a charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school.

In the case of learning resources that have been allocated for the use of individual students (such as text books, library books, tablet computers, student planners, etc), it is the Trust's policy that parents/carers will be required to meet the cost of replacement (as new) of any resources that are lost or otherwise not returned to the school by the date by which they are requested to be returned.

The school will make arrangements to invoice parents/carers, or for payments to be made via the school payment system (ParentPay). Cash may not be levied.

2.8 Transport

Parents/carers may be required to meet the cost of transport from home to an activity sanctioned but not provided by the school (this includes but is not limited to travel to Work Experience).

2.9 School Fund

Each school within the Trust operates a scheme for voluntary donations from parents/carers, alumni and students (known as the 'School Fund'). Funds donated to a school may only be used for the benefit of the individual school to which the donation was made. Parents/carers will be invited to make a financial contribution to the School Fund, which may be used to:

- i) provide educational experiences for students, including sport/PE, music and drama, as well as wider enrichment activities
- ii) acquire educational resources and fixed assets which would otherwise be unaffordable from the school's main budget, and
- ii) support the school community through celebration events and prizegiving, and through activities and events in art, music, sport, school productions and other relevant areas.

From time to time an appeal may be launched by the school in order to help finance a particular project. It will be made clear in correspondence to parents/carers inviting contributions to School Fund, or to individual appeals, that such contributions are wholly voluntary.

3. REMISSION OF CHARGES

3.1 Parents/Carers on Benefits

The children of parents/carers who are in receipt of benefits (including Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, etc) will usually be eligible for Free School Meals, and may be eligible for general remissions (see section 3.2 below).

3.2 General Remissions

Students in receipt of free school meals and those eligible for pupil premium may, at the discretion of the Trust/school, also be eligible for a full or part remission of charges in relation to:

- Enrichment activities
- Examination fees
- Music tuition
- Curriculum resources & materials
- Printing & photocopying
- Loss or damage to property
- Transport

Full details of the individual school's procedures for supporting parents/carers on low incomes are set out on the school's website and information is also available from the **School Office**. Further information is set out in the Trust's **Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Procedures** (also available on the website).

In many cases, the arrangements for financial support exceed the minimum legal requirements (eg uniform grants), and reflect the Trust's policy of trying to ensure full participation in school life for all students. Please refer to the individual school's websites or contact the School Office for more information.

3.2 Music Remissions & Looked after Children

The cost of individual instrumental music tuition will be remitted where the tuition is provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum (where followed).

No charge may be made for individual music tuition provided in school hours in respect of a Looked after Child (as defined in the Children Act 1989).