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## Charging and Remissions Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

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Bright Futures 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:

- 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.

Please note that while this policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

## **Legal framework**

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- 'Our Funding Agreement'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and procedures:

- Complaints Procedures Policy

## **Charging for education**

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We will not charge parents 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, or part of RE.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the student's parents.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school.
- Examination resits, if the student is being prepared for the resits at the school.

We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them
- Optional extras
- Music tuition (in certain circumstances)
- Vocational tuition (in certain circumstances)
- Certain early years provision
- Use of community facilities

We will make it clear that, in the following circumstances, we will propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to the school:

## Optional extras

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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 student is being prepared for at the school
  - RE
- Examination entry fees where the student has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that arranged by the LA for the student to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to students

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the cost, of the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- Buildings and accommodation
- Employment of non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff (including TAs) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra
- Teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating students.

The school will not charge a subsidy for any students 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, the school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

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.

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.

## **Examination fees**

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The school may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A-levels), but the student was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the prescribed 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 or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the fee.

## **Examination resits**

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Where a student is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the school will pay the fee. Once students have left the school, resits must be taken at the school.

If a student or their parents 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 parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parents or student will have their fees refunded.

## **Voluntary contributions**

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The school may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the school activities. The school will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents 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.

## **Music tuition**

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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 student's parents.

The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

## **Transport**

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The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the school or LA has arranged for students to be educated.
- Transporting students to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided for an educational visit.

## **Residential visits**

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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, or part of RE.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying students on visits.

The school may ask for a contribution towards board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

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)

## **Education partly during school hours**

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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.

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 the school may ask for a voluntary contribution 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.

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.

The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by the school's funds.

Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

## **Damaged or lost items**

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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.

## **Remissions**

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The school has set aside funds 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 needs basis.

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)

To request assistance, parents should contact the headteacher.

### **School trip refunds**

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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 due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, the headteacher will discuss options with the SLT, 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, the headteacher will include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that a student or their parents cancel the student's place on a trip, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given.

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 headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given.

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 £1 per student. If the excess is less than £1 per student, this will be paid into the school's account.

Excess expenditure will be subsidised by 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.

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

### **Monitoring and review**

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This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2021.