



Blenheim

Charging and Remissions Policy

Committee: Finance, Facilities and Staff (FFS) and FGB

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Aim

The Governors and School aim to make a broad programme of trips and activities accessible to as many students as possible and to establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the school budget.

Policy into Practice

Any charges made by the school must meet the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and the Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999. The Governors endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child should have its access to the curriculum limited by charges.

Education in School Hours

Charges will not be made for any activities which form part of a prescribed examination syllabus, or are in fulfilment of National Curriculum requirements.

Activities which are wholly or mainly within school hours (50% of the activity or more; this does not include the lunch break) should not normally be chargeable although voluntary contributions will be invited. However, instrumental music tuition and/or loan of instruments may be compulsorily charged unless it is part of a public examination or National Curriculum course.

In practical subjects, parents will be asked for the full or partial cost of material if they have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

Voluntary contributions may be invited for trips which take place mainly within school hours. This may include a contribution towards staff cover costs. Where this does apply it is made clear in the letters to parents about the visits. No child may be excluded because of inability to pay but the school is entitled to cancel the trip if the level of contributions does not meet its budgetary requirements.

Education Outside School Hours

Where less than 50% of the activity falls within school hours, the activity will be deemed to take place outside school hours and charges will be made.

No charge will be made for education provided mainly or wholly outside school hours where the activity is a requirement of a public examination or of the National Curriculum. In the case of activities such as Biology fieldwork, the location to be studied will depend upon voluntary contributions.

No charge will be made for covering the cost of students wishing to participate and where parents are unwilling or unable to contribute. However, parents must appreciate that such non-contributing students could make a particular trip/activity financially non-viable.

Charges will be made for optional extras, (e.g. language exchange) and participation will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges made. The cost will include travel, board and lodging, materials and equipment, non-teaching staff costs, entrance fees and insurance.

When dealing with parents in receipt of statutory benefits, it should be stressed that all such matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Such support would be at the Headteacher's discretion.

In cases where charges are to be levied, parents must be advised in advance and monies collected prior to the activity. Requests for help from parents on statutory benefits will be considered and assistance provided within the limits of the school's budget. Complete confidentiality will be observed in all such matters. Any insurance costs will be included in charges for trips or activities.

iPad for Learning Scheme

The school provides iPads for curriculum use where it is required in the lesson.

Where a parent prefers not to contribute to the iPad for Learning Scheme, the student will not be at a disadvantage in class, and will have the use of a loaned device to participate in the activity of that lesson.

Parental contributions to the scheme will enable students to take an issued device home, and add personal apps and data, and use the device for homework of an evening. A regular monthly contribution for the duration of the scheme is required to permit these benefits although the device remains the property of the school, throughout the scheme.

At the end of the scheme, the device may be purchased by the parent if they wish. A final payment is required, and all monthly payments must be up to date, for title to pass.

Requests for help from parents on statutory benefits will be considered and assistance provided within the limits of the school's budget. The school's Pupil Premium funding will be used to support these students. When dealing with parents in receipt of statutory benefits, it should be stressed that all such matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Such support would be at the Headteacher's discretion.

Support will also be considered for parents with multiple children at the school, subject to the school's budget.

Charges for the scheme will be based on costs for the device package at the time, and will not include any additional charge to cover the cost of devices for those students where parents are unwilling or unable to contribute.

Exam fees

The Centre (Blenheim High School) will pay initial exam fees and, where appropriate, initial registration fees, for external exams.

The Awarding Bodies (ABs) allow a certain time from the date of entry for making amendments, e.g. tier changes, without charge. Furthermore, entry fees will be reimbursed for any candidate withdrawn during this period. It is expected that departments will review their entries and make any necessary adjustments during this period, thus avoiding unnecessary exams expenditure. The Exams Officer will issue timely reminders to departments of the deadline for each AB as it approaches.

Avoidable expenditure arising from late entries, withdrawals or amendments is payable by the department. Where a student or parent requests the late entry, tier change or withdrawal, and this is contrary to the initial decision made by the department based on the student's performance at that time, payment of the penalty fees incurred will be the responsibility of the student.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam, unless the absence is supported by medical evidence. Students and parents will be made aware of this policy, in writing and verbally, at the start of the exam period.

Retake fees for first and any subsequent retakes are normally paid by the candidate. However, if the retake is necessitated by departmental error, the cost will be met by the department.

External candidates will not normally be accepted. An exception, normally restricted to one attempt, will be considered, at the discretion of the Examinations Officer, for ex-Blenheim students who are seeking to improve their GCSE/A level grade. External candidates will be liable for the entry fee levied by the AB, including any penalty charged for late entry, and a small additional charge to cover administrative costs. Should the external candidate be the only examinee for any part of the session, they will be liable for the extra invigilator costs incurred.

Enquiries about results (EARs)

EARs may be requested by departments or students and responsibility for payment lies with the instigator. Where the EAR requested is a re-mark, payment must be made at the outset but will be reimbursed if the re-mark results in a changed grade.