

Reading Girls' School



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Aims

Reading Girls' School believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) regardless of their parents'/carers' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- Charges will not be made
- Charges will be made

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents/carers who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. Such requests will also make it clear that where insufficient funds are available, the activity may not take place.

The Law says:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, parents/carers will be notified of this from the outset
- No child will be excluded from an activity because parents/carers are unable to pay
- If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled
- If a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

No charges will be made for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a

prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at school

- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at school *
- Examination resit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at school **
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours
 - if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or
 - part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip.

* If a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, a charge will be made.

** An examination entry fee will be charged for the following:

- The examination is on the approved list, but the student was not prepared for it at the school
- A student resits a modular examination in order to improve upon her current grade. In the case of an early entry, proposed by the school, a resit should not be charged for if the school believes the student could improve their grade, but a charge may be made if a resit is against the advice of the school.

Activities for which charges may be made:

1. **Activities outside school hours:** Non-residential activities other than those listed in 1 above which take place outside school hours but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during the school hours). Definition of School Hours: 08.40 to 13.20 and 14.00 to 15.10 or as may be varied on occasions.
2. **Residential activities:** Board and lodging costs of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. Also residential trips deemed to take place outside school time.
3. **Musical instrument tuition:** The School will make charges for teaching either an individual, or students in a group of up to four, to play a musical instrument, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student.
4. **Public Examinations**
 - a. The Headteacher has the delegated responsibility to decide whether students are entered into particular examinations

- b. The Headteacher has the authority to charge for examination entries in certain circumstances – for example where students have wilfully not attended the examination and that no documentation is provided to substantiate their absence
 - c. The Headteacher is authorised to request payment for wasted examination fees.
5. **Loss and damage to school property:** Parents/carers of students who damage or lose any item of school property or equipment, including, for example, windows or computer software, are liable for the costs of repair or replacement. In reality, any problems are usually resolved amicably.
6. **School minibus:** Only the school's students, staff or parents/carers may travel at a charge in the school's minibus. Students may be charged to cover the cost of the journey incurred.
7. **Miscellaneous charges:** Parents/carers will be charged for materials used in class where parents have indicated beforehand that they wish to own the finished article (eg Art, Food Technology, Textiles, etc).

Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents/carers in particular circumstances.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges are those in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by HMRC) does not exceed £16,190
- Guaranteed State Pension

Additional Considerations:

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we will publish a list of visits and their approximate costs at the beginning of the school year so that parents/carers can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents/carers to pay in instalments

- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a “first pay, first served” basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.