

Charging & Remissions Policy

RIDGEWAY EDUCATION TRUST

Approved by the Trust Board: 03 March 2020

Review by: March 2022

Charging and Remissions Policy

1. General

- Ridgeway Education Trust believes that all its students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' or 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.
- Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Academies (including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges) are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities. 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. This policy is reviewed at least every two years.
- The policy identifies activities for which:
 - voluntary contributions may be requested
 - charges will be made
 - charges will not be made
 - charges may be remitted

2. Voluntary contributions

- The Law states:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions Headteachers will make this clear to parents/carers from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents/carers are unable or unwilling to pay.

If insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.
- 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.

3. Charges will be made for

- a) Board and lodging costs on residential visits.
- b) Transport and entrance fees for educational visits whether they take place in or out of school hours.
- c) Optional extras/activities which take place wholly or mainly outside of school hours, which are not part of the curriculum or examination specification e.g. sailing club, theatre visits, ski trips.
- d) The cost of transport to an activity sanctioned, though not provided by, the school, e.g. travel to a work experience placement.
- e) Music tuition for individuals or groups of students to play an instrument or to sing and hire of instrument, which is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus for all students.
- f) The cost of entering a student for a non-prescribed examination.

- g) The supply of materials for practical subjects such as Design and Technology or Food Technology but only if the student wishes to take the final product home once completed.
- h) Optional workshops where professional artists are brought in that take place in or out of school hours.
- i) Extended day services offered to pupils, such as breakfast clubs and after school clubs

All charges will be calculated at the cost per student of that activity and will be kept as low as possible.

When any trip is arranged, parents/carers will be notified of the policy for allocating places. This will recognise that parents/carers may not be able to pay quickly and may have to budget for the trip over a reasonable period of time.

4. No charges will be made for

- a) An admission application;
- b) Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- c) 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;
- d) Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) 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 the school, or part of religious education, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent/carer;
- e) Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school*;
- f) Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours (see 3c);
- g) Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours (see 3c)
 - i) if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - ii) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or
 - iii) part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;

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

5. Remissions

- In order to remove financial barriers from students, the Trust Board has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at a reduced charge to parents/carers of students eligible for Pupil Premium funding:
 - a. Activities that take place within school hours and are required as part of the specification for a public examination for the national curriculum; and
 - b. Curriculum-related residential visits.
- The proportion of charges remitted for students in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) will be up to 50%, and a maximum value of £200, of the cost of any trip or visit. Remitted charges of up to 10% are available for students recorded as Ever 6 and up to 5% for Ever 5 Service Children. The Headteacher should be contacted in the case of hardship.

- Voluntary contributions will be requested for curriculum related non-residential visits although as payment is sought by way of voluntary contributions remission of charges is not applicable.
- In order to ensure an equitable distribution of financial assistance RET reserves the right to limit the number of visits for which assistance will be given for any one student with three visits generally being considered the maximum.
- Financial help may be available from the music service for students eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Details of the process of applying for assistance are made available directly from the school music department.

6. Withdrawals and cancellations

- If a student's place on a visit is cancelled by the parent/carer the following will apply:
 - a. If the cancellation is due to ill health a refund claim may be possible through RET insurance. Please contact the individual school in this instance.
 - b. If the cancellation is due to any other reasons the initial deposit for residential visits will be non-refundable and the refund of other monies will depend on payment terms RET has with the visit provider. For day visits and workshops payments will not normally be refundable.
 - c. If a student fails to attend a visit/trip then no refund will be made.

7. Additional considerations

The Trust Board 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 RET, and all RET academies, try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible a list of visits (and their approximate cost) will be published at the beginning of the school year so that parents/carers can plan ahead;
- RET has established a system for parents/carers to pay in instalments;
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip;
- RET acknowledges that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and this method of selection will be avoided.
- RET will ensure that visits/trips are as cost effective as possible, so that these opportunities are as accessible to as many families as possible.