

# CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The Governing Body has adopted  
The Meridian School Charging and  
Remissions Policy

Date adopted by the Governing Body:

Chair of Governors: ..... *[Signature]* *March 2014*

Date of Review: *June 2014*

## **1. Introduction**

### **Purpose**

We believe that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents' 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.

## **2. Items for which no charge will be made**

No charges will be made for the following:

- 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;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school \*;
- Examination re-sit(s)\* if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the 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.

## **3. Trips and Visits**

For the purposes of this charging and remission policy, trips and visits need to be dealt with under separate categories depending on whether the activity is wholly or mainly during normal school hours, or an optional extra outside of normal school hours.

In the event of non-payment, the school retains the right to cancel a student's participation unless application has been made for partial remission of fees.

### **3.1. Day Trips during Normal School Hours**

Day visits which take place wholly or mainly in school hours must be provided free of charge. However, parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip. If insufficient voluntary contributions are forthcoming the visit may have to be cancelled - parents will be notified of this contingency. Students whose parents/guardians do not contribute will not be discriminated against.

### **3.2. Residential Trips wholly or mainly within school hours**

The School is entitled to charge for the full cost of board and lodging for residential visits and can request a voluntary contribution towards the other costs of the trip. In practice, given the difficulties involved in identifying these separately, we will ask parents to make a voluntary contribution equal to the full cost of the residential trip.

### **3.3. Day Trips and Residential Visits Outside Of Normal School Hours**

The School will charge parents for the full cost, including board and lodging, when a trip or visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'.

An optional extra:

- falls wholly or mainly outside school hours, i.e. a skiing holiday during the school holidays is an optional extra.
- does not form part of the National Curriculum or the statutory requirements for religious education;
- is not part of a syllabus towards a prescribed public examination.

The parents' agreement to meet the costs of a visit categorised as an optional extra will always be obtained in writing before that visit is planned in detail.

### **3.4. Trips and Visits Surplus Balances**

If a surplus balance exists after all trip expenses have been accounted for, this will be offered to parents provided it is above the minimum threshold of £5 per student on day trips and £10 per student on residential trips. Any surplus remaining after this will be treated as a contribution to school funds.

## **4. Instrumental Tuition**

- A 100% charge will be made for individual and shared instrumental tuition unless it is in preparation for a prescribed public examination (i.e. GCSE or AS/A2).
- A 50% tuition subsidy for students learning to play a musical instrument (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;

## **5. Exam Fees**

The School reserves the right to charge for the cost of exam re-sits where no further preparation has been provided by the school, there will also be a charge for any requested re-marks or access to scripts. The amount charged will incorporate a small administration charge and will be clearly stated on the request form. Charges will also be made for non-attendance at exams where the School has paid the entry and no medical certificate is received. For further details see the school's examination policy.

## **6. Ingredients/Materials/Equipment/Texts**

The School reserves the right to charge for ingredients, materials or equipment if parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the 'finished product'. This is directly relevant for practical subjects such as Design & Technology, Photography and Art. A charge will also be made for texts where the student wishes to own the text.

## **7. Broken Equipment and Lost/Damaged Texts**

The School allows all departments to charge students and/or their parents the cost of replacement items where these have been damaged or broken as a direct result of misconduct on the student's part.

## **8. Locker Keys/School Diary**

The School will make a one-off nominal charge when a student starts school for the use of a locker and annual School Diary. Any lost locker keys, diaries or smart cards will incur a small charge for their replacement.

## **9. Voluntary contributions**

The School may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- Any activity or trip which takes place during school hours, including non-curriculum activities;
- School equipment;
- School funds generally.

The students of parents or guardians who are unable or unwilling to contribute may not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make an activity possible it may be cancelled.

## **10. Additional Considerations**

The School 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 shall publish a list of all known day trips and residential visits planned for that year; this will include an estimate of the cost for each activity enabling parents to plan their financial commitments;
- We have a system in place for parents 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.

## 11. Remissions

### a) For parents / guardians in receipt of:

- Income Support or Income-Based Jobseekers' Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit (providing that they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the HMRC, that does not exceed the sum given in the HMRC rules);
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;

Remission will be provided for:

- Music tuition fees in line with Hertfordshire Music Service remission of fees scheme;
- Board and lodging costs for those residential trips wholly or mainly within school hours. (In practice we will ask parents to make a contribution of 50% towards the total cost of these trips.)

### b) For post 16 students:

the 16 – 19 Bursary Fund is available using the following criteria

- i) They must be enrolled on a government funded, full or part-time course;
- ii) They must be at least 16 years of age, and not over 19 years of age, on 31 August prior to the academic year for which the grant is being applied for;
- iii) They must be a UK resident; and
- iv) They must be economically or socially disadvantaged
- v) They must have 90% attendance (excluding authorised absences) and comply with the Academy's behaviour policy
- vi) They must provide documentary evidence of household income.

A statement for administering claims and for making any claims is available from the Finance office.