



Charging and Remission Policy

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| Responsibility | Finance & Resources: Delegated to the Head Teacher | |
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1. Policy Statement

During the school day, all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, plus religious education will be provided free of charge.

Voluntary contributions, however, will be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs. For example, external teachers coming into the school and visits by pupils outside of the school.

No student will be prevented from participating in any activity offered because their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay. If, however, insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity or visit, it might not be possible for the activity/trip to take place.

2. Purpose of the policy

The policy is intended to ensure that:

- a) the educational opportunities offered wholly or mainly during school hours are available to all students regardless of ability or willingness to pay.
- b) occasions when charges are made or voluntary contributions requested are within the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act and Circular 2/89.

3. Charging practices

3.1 For visits and activities wholly or mainly during school hours

There will be no compulsory charge for visits and activities during school hours. However, parents/carers will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost. The school's arrangements for visits and activities mainly or wholly during school hours will be subject to sufficient funds being available from voluntary contributions to cover their costs.

Where insufficient funds are collected to cover the costs of the visit, the school may cancel the visit and return all the contributions made.

Where contributions are in excess of the required sum for a particular visit, the school may decide to use the surplus funds to support other visits and will advise the parents/carers accordingly. However, if there is a surplus of £15 or more per student, contributing parents/carers will be offered a refund.

3.2 Visits and activities mainly outside school hours

Where a visit or activity is mainly outside school hours, parents/carers are liable for the whole cost. Financial assistance will not normally be available for visits and activities which take place mainly outside school hours. The

cost to parents/carers will not exceed the actual costs incurred, and if there is a surplus the money will be refunded equally between contributors.

3.3 Music Tuition

The Richmond upon Thames School follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made for instrumental tuition when the service is provided by a peripatetic music teacher. Payment for this service is paid directly to Richmond Music Trust and some financial assistance is available.

Details of these lessons are available from the music department and on the school's website. There is no charge for music tuition for children in Local Authority Care. This includes instrument hire, music books and exam fees.

3.4 Financial Assistance / Remission

Families may qualify for remission or help with charges if they are in receipt of:

- Income Support (IS)
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (IBJSA)
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that the family does not receive Working Tax Credit and their annual gross income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after stopping qualification for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit, provided that the family's net earned income does not exceed £7,400 per year (as calculated by Universal Credit award statements)

Parents can request assistance from the school for help with some costs in the following circumstances:

- specific individual circumstances that have caused temporary hardship or
- recently moved into hardship but not yet receiving the benefits.

Remission is at the Head Teacher's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided.

See appendix 1 for more information on the school's Hardship Fund.

4. Pupil Premium Statement

The school has an annual Pupil Premium statement which is available on the school website.

5. Books, learning materials and equipment

5.1 Classroom learning materials

The school provides most of the books, equipment and instructions required during the school day to follow the school's curriculum. Parents/carers will be asked to provide students with some basic equipment for their own personal use at school and at home. This includes pens, pencils, a ruler, an eraser, a rough workbook, a calculator and a dictionary.

Students may be asked to buy some of their textbooks for accredited courses (e.g. GCSEs).

5.2 Materials for practical lessons

In many practical lessons, students make items that they want to take home to keep. In these cases, the cost of materials will be indicated to parents/carers in advance so that they may inform the school whether or not they wish to purchase the finished articles. Parents/carers are expected to provide ingredients for Food Technology. In exceptional circumstances, basic ingredients will be provided by the school so that no student is excluded from the planned curriculum.

In some subjects, students may want resources which are above the minimum required for the lesson in which case students may purchase these from the school.

6. Examination expenses

In almost all cases the school makes no charge for examination entries. Parents/carers may be asked to pay a fee for an examination where,

- a) the student is absent from the examination without a Doctor's certificate.
- b) parents/carers request a re-marking which is not supported by the school.
- c) the exam relates to subjects not offered within the curriculum
- d) Additional entries for specialist university courses
- e) Private entries

7. Optional Extras

The school will make a charge for optional extra activities:

- a) that are neither part of the curriculum,
- b) nor part of an examination syllabus.

If these activities are provided offsite and are provided during the school day, pupils who do not wish to take part in these activities, for whatever reason, will be offered a suitable alternative in school.

8. E-Learning Scheme

The school operates an e-learning scheme where students have access to a one-to-one device. The scheme is fully embedded within lessons across the school. Students use their devices within lessons to facilitate their learning, but they also provide a valuable independent learning tool for extended work outside the lesson, including the completion of homework where appropriate.

8.1 iPads

Parents have the option to enter into a three-year agreement for the provision of an iPad at the start of Year 7 With the option to keep the existing device for the last 2 years for an additional charge. This option is offered through a computer leasing company and the devices are not owned by the school. Information is provided by the school annually in May/June to enable parents to sign up to the scheme.

If a student leaves in-year, they must cancel their direct debit by contacting the school and return the iPad, case and charger to the school.

8.1.1 iPads - repairs and damages

The school leases the iPads. This includes the device, portable keyboard (where relevant), charger and case issued to the student. Parents/carers will be asked to pay for any iPad and school-issued portable keyboard, charger or case if it is lost, damaged or defaced by their child.

- If an iPad is lost or damaged beyond repair, parents have the option to enter into a new agreement for the provision of a new iPad. This option is offered through a leasing company.
- If an iPad is damaged and the damage is repairable, a claim should be submitted.
- If a school-issued portable keyboard, charger or case is lost or damaged beyond repair, parents/carers will be invoiced for the cost of a replacement and payment will be collected via Parentpay.

9. Loss and damage

Parents/carers will be asked to pay for items of school property or the property of other people in the school which their child has lost or damaged, including for example, window breakage and graffiti removal.

10. Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay, to support those who cannot pay or choose not to pay.

Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions, Pupil Premium if appropriate, and fundraising.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

Appendix 1 - Hardship Fund

Purpose

The Richmond upon Thames School's (RTS) Financial Hardship Fund is there to support students whose family circumstances mean that they would not be able to participate in educational trips and other school events.

The Charging and Remissions Policy, found on the school website, details what the school can charge for and what is requested as a voluntary contribution. Families do not need to apply for the RTS Financial Hardship Fund to cover voluntary contributions. Please read this policy before applying and contact the Finance Office (accounts@rts.richmond.sch.uk) if you have any questions.

Practice and procedures

What support can families apply for?

If families are eligible, we always advise applications for Free School Meals (FSM), regardless of whether or not they wish to have a free meal provided. This is because the entitlement to FSM automatically triggers the receipt of an extra £1,050 per annum from the government to spend on that student's education, and so this can be partly used to finance trips and events. More details of this and eligibility criteria are available [here](#). The strategy on how RTS spends the pupil premium grant funding is available [here](#) for your review. Students are not allocated a personal budget. However, families do not need to be in receipt of FSM to qualify for The Financial Hardship Grant.

What is the eligibility for a grant from the (RTS) Financial Hardship Fund?

Because there are only limited funds, we have to make sure that grants reach those most in need of support. The more information that families can provide regarding their circumstances, whether they are long standing or just short term, can help us decide how the funds should be most suitably distributed.

What "evidence" needs to be shown?

Formal evidence is not required for this application. Applicants are required to provide details of the family's circumstances and household income on the Hardship Fund Application Form for the school to make a decision. We might ask for more information if needed. All correspondence and communication is dealt with in the strictest confidence by the school staff and Trustees.

When should families apply?

The Finance and Resources Committee will consider applications every term at their committee meeting and the calendar of meetings will be posted on the school website. Families should submit applications as soon as they become aware that they need support. Families must notify the school of any change in circumstances that might affect the continuation of the grant, else grants may be recharged, either in whole or in part.

In the event of an emergency, please contact the Finance Office via accounts@rts.richmond.sch.uk as grants may be awarded in extreme cases outside of the published committee meetings.

Will families automatically get what they apply for?

All grants from the RTS Financial Hardship Fund are discretionary and will be allocated depending on need and funds available. The more information families can supply in the application about what is difficult to pay for and why, the more easily the committee will be able to assess their needs.

How will families know what trips and events might be difficult to pay for?

We publish a list of the trips per year group in advance with a rough indication of cost. Non-educational trips, such as a ski trip will not normally be supported.

Will the grant be paid in cash?

Grants from the RTS Financial Hardship Fund will be recorded directly into the relevant trip, event or school cost centre. This is a book-keeping exercise and no cash exchange will be involved.

What should families do if they don't agree with the committee's decision?

They should write to the Chair of Trustees stating why they think the decision of the committee is incorrect. The Chair of Trustees will then consider the appeal and reconsider the application with the help of two other Trustees who were not previously involved. The Outcome of this reconsideration will be notified in writing and is final.

Where can families get further information?

Contact the Finance Office on accounts@rts.richmond.sch.uk

Associated documents

- School Uniform Grant Applications - If you think you may be eligible for support with buying your child's school uniform, please complete the form [here](#)
- Hardship fund application form. This form is available [here](#)