



ABBEY COLLEGE POLICY STATEMENT

CHARGING & REMISSIONS

1. Introduction

The Governing Body of Abbey College recognises and accepts its responsibilities for the establishment and maintenance of a Charging and Remissions Policy which identifies when it is appropriate to seek parental/carer financial contribution toward the cost of specified activities. In some cases it is appropriate to seek voluntary contributions from parents/carers to support an activity which is provided, in other cases a charge will be levied.

For the avoidance of doubt, Abbey College will ensure that all statutory educational activities are provided free of charge. Additionally, the College will provide a range of additional activities which parents will normally be expected to fund.

This policy has been adopted to ensure fairness, equity and equality of opportunity for all students and to ensure consistency in approach to charging and remissions.

2. Education

Abbey College will not charge for:

- An admission application.
- 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 Curriculum¹, 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.
- Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum.

Abbey College will charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them.
- Optional extras (see below).
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances.

3. Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge will be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

¹ It should be noted that 'part of the National Curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum 'inclusion statement' (e.g. developing teamwork skills).

Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the National Curriculum.
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school.
 - Part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school.
- Transport that is not required to take the student to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the student to be provided with education.
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra.
- Non teaching staff costs.
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra.
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge will not include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

4. Public Examinations

Our examination entry policy is to enter all students for public examinations for which they have met all the requirements. It is the Governors' policy to charge students for examinations which they have previously sat. Charges equivalent to the cost of entry will be made for January GCSE resits and students re-sitting A/AS modules which they have not been explicitly re-prepared for by a taught course. However, students studying full time in Year 12 for GCSE courses for examination in June will not be charged. Where students are entered or withdrawn for an examination at a late stage due to parental request or failing to meet the entry requirements, then an examination fee will normally be charged.

5. Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide students with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Music is an important aspect of life at Abbey College. However, where students have lessons with visiting peripatetic music staff an annual charge towards the cost will be made. This is significantly subsidised by the Governing Body, and provides for up to 30 lessons of tuition spread across three terms.

6. Activities/Trips/Visits

It is the policy of the College to provide a wide variety of interesting and stimulating activities both during the college day and also after college, at weekends and during holidays. Where these activities are a statutory part of an examination course they will be funded by the College. However, where they are of a voluntary nature parents/carers will normally be asked either to fund the activity or to make a contribution towards it. In these circumstances, if any of the parents/carers of those students who wish to take part do not make the required contributions, it may prove necessary to cancel the activity.

7. Materials and Equipment

The College does not charge for artefacts made by students at the College. In some subjects e.g. Food Technology, students may be required to provide ingredients. From time to time the College will offer to purchase on behalf of students calculators, or other items e.g. revision guides for which we will charge the purchase price. If any student causes the loss of, or is found to have wilfully damaged or defaced, any College materials or equipment (eg textbooks), then the College will normally charge the full cost of replacement of such items.

8. Access to Information

The College may charge for the provision of information requested under the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act and the Environmental Information Regulations.

First request. If all the requested information can be provided electronically and you are happy to receive it in this format, there will be no charge for providing the information. If this is your first request and your request will require more than 20 pages of photocopying there is a charge of 10p per photocopy plus postage. We will issue you with a “fees notice” to inform you of the amount that needs to be paid before we can process your request.

If you have made previous FOI requests. If all the requested information can be provided electronically and you are happy to receive it in this format, there will be no charge for providing the information. If you have had a previous request in the last 6 months and your request will require more than 10 pages of photocopying there is a charge you 10p per photocopy plus postage. We will issue you with a “fees notice” to inform you of the amount that needs to be paid before we can process your request.

If your request will take us more than 18 hours. If we estimate that it will take more than 18 hours to locate and prepare the information you request, we will contact you and ask you to refine the scope of your request so that it can be serviced in less than 18 hours. If you are not prepared to refine the scope of your request then unfortunately we will not be able to provide you with the information.

If you want to view the documents. If you would prefer to come in and view the documents, or we are unable to copy the documents for you, we can arrange for supervised access to the information. This is charged at £25 per hour or part thereof. We will issue you with a “fees notice” to inform you of the amount that needs to be paid in advance of the access.

Subject Access Requests. The first time you request to see all of your information under the Data Protection Act, we will do this for you free of charge. Any subsequent requests will be charged at £10 per request.

9. Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The Governing Body or Headteacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it will be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

10. Financial Support

Abbey College is not permitted to use public funding to provide financial assistance to families. Parents who find it difficult to make a contribution, may be eligible for financial assistance from the Trustees Charitable Fund. This is especially true where families are in receipt of income support, income-based jobseekers allowance, working families tax credit, or similar. The College administers the fund on behalf of the Trustees, applications for support from the fund should be made in writing to:

Andrew Stafford
Director of Finance, Business and Administration
Abbey College
Hollow Lane
Ramsey
Huntingdon
PE26 1DG

11. Remissions

Whenever charges are made, there are students whose family circumstances may exempt them from payment. The College will consider remission from payment for all or part of the charge for an activity, providing that the parents'/carers' only income is derived from state benefits. Individual applications must be made on each occasion for which remission of all or a part of a charge is requested.

Where appropriate, students or parents/carers may request consideration for remission from charges as outlined in the information provided to the student and parent/carer by the activity organiser.

Any student or parent/carer seeking remission in respect of a charge will be expected to provide the Director of Finance, Business and Administration with details of his/her personal circumstances.

No individual student will be prevented by financial hardship from participating in an event that is considered to be essential to his/her programme of study.

Policy Developed by:	Andrew Stafford
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