

Stepping Stones School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Adopted: September 2020

Review date: August 2021

The school aims to provide a range of experiences to enrich and extend students' learning and contribute to personal development. All students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

In accordance with our commitment to Accessibility and Equal Opportunities, Governors at Stepping Stones are therefore committed to limiting charging to parents where at all possible outside the agreed fee structure.

1. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

2. School Meals

Stepping Stones School does not provide a school lunch as the school does not have catering facilities. However, if a student is entitled to free school meals, the family should contact the Family Liaison Officer to discuss receipt of food vouchers or assistance with purchasing a lunch (up to a fixed value) at the Cookie Bar.

3. Public Examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where students have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the student fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that student's parents. These principles apply equally to re-sits.

4. Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours except for peripatetic tuition (**section 8**).

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

We may charge for:

- materials, books, instruments or equipment that the parent wishes their child to keep or own (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras (**section 5**)

5. Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the student is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is **not**:
 - a) part of the National Curriculum
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school
 - c) 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 taking the student to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing body has arranged for the student to be provided with education.
- extended day services offered to students (please note at present the breakfast club and homework after school club are free for but the school will review this after the 2020/21 academic year).

The cost of optional extras

The Headteacher will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities.

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. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (**section 12**).

When 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
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including 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.
- The costs of buildings and accommodation.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be based on parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

6. Activities that take place *partly* during school hours either on or off site

Where most of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in **section 4**.

- Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

- In cases where most of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. So, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a visit.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in **section 5**.

7. Residential Activities

Our school will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- education provided on any visit 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 religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

Our school will charge for:

Board **and** **lodging**
 When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. **Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying the full cost** (see **section 11** for more guidance on remissions).

Travel

Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per student. These charges may not apply to those students entitled to remissions, but no other students will be charged extra to cover those costs.

Activities

The school may charge for residential activities that fall **outside** of school hours (**see section 5**).

8. Peripatetic Tuition within School Hours

All peripatetic tuition is organised between the peripatetic teacher and the parent of the student. It is not the responsibility of the school to arrange this nor should the school office manage any administrative tasks on behalf of the peripatetic classes, including taking of money for fees.

The school is only responsible for arranging the rooming timetable for these classes.

9. Extended Activities

Stepping Stones School provides a well-rounded and extensive education for our students which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities during the lunch break
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

At present, there is no charge for these extended activities but the school will review this after the 2020/21 academic year.

10. Refunds

Request for refunds for trips will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the school is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the School Business Manager. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

The school reserves the right not to refund costs where a student is withdrawn from an activity by the school because of a student's breach of the school's behaviour policy.

11. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a student, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the School Business Manager and Headteacher and dependent on the situation.

12. Remissions and concessions

The school will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will authorise the remission of charges.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and students, and this will be determined by the Governing Body and Headteacher.

13. Voluntary contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to contribute.

14. Inability or unwillingness to pay

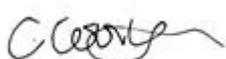
Stepping Stones School is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all students, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

15. Complaints

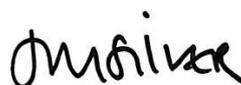
Complaints about the implementation of this policy or any decisions taken in line with the policy will be considered as part of the school's complaints procedures.

Claire Cookson
Chair of Governors



Date 1st September 2020

Jacqueline Silver
Headteacher



Date 1st September 2020

This policy will be reviewed annually