



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Charging and Remissions - AST

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Charging and Remissions

INTRODUCTION

Under the Funding Agreement, the Trust is required to comply with Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 (“the Act”). This requires schools to determine a policy setting out the circumstances in which the school will charge for certain activities, and the remissions which are available for those charges. The policy regarding charges and admissions must be kept under review. This charging and remissions policy has been adopted by the Trust in line with that requirement.

The Trust recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities including school visits, afterschool clubs and residential experiences can make towards students’ personal and social education. The Trust aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

The general principle within the Act is that no charge will be made for education provided by the School during (or mainly during) school hours, or education provided outside (or mainly outside) school hours which is part of the national curriculum, a syllabus for a prescribed examination for which the student is being prepared by the School, or part of statutory religious education.

In addition, the school will not charge for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with any education provided during (or mainly during) school hours, or outside (or mainly outside) school hours in the circumstances set out in the paragraph above.

There are, however, exceptions to this general rule which set out the circumstances in which the School may make compulsory charges.

PERMITTED COMPULSORY CHARGES

The School is permitted, and intends, to make compulsory charges to meet the costs of the following:

- The cost of board and lodging on all residential trips regardless of whether they take place during (or mainly during) school hours or outside (or mainly outside) school hours;
- All costs associated with activities, trips and visits which take place outside (or mainly outside) school hours;

- Tuition in playing a musical instrument (including the hire of musical instruments) or vocal tuition where the tuition is not part of the national curriculum or the syllabus for a prescribed public examination, and where this has been provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- Entering a student for a public examination which is not a prescribed examination, and for the cost of the School preparing the student for that examination;
- Applying for re-marking of an examination paper at the request of the parent or student where the School has assessed the examination paper and has decided that the re-mark is unlikely to result in a higher grade;
- Entering a student for a prescribed public examination which has already been taken by the student (i.e. re-sitting an examination) and where no further preparation for the examination has been provided by the school;
- School meals provided to students not entitled to free school meals under either the Universal Infant Free School Meals ("UIFSM") or Free School Meals ("FSM") schemes (see below); and
- Optional extras provided outside (or mainly outside) school hours.

All children in Reception Year to Year 2 are entitled to free school meals under the UIFSM scheme. Pupils/Students from Year 3 onwards may be entitled to free school meals under the FSM scheme if they are from a low income family or in receipt of specified benefits. Parents should obtain further information about eligibility and how to apply via their home local authority's website.

In addition, where the school has entered a pupil for a public examination, and the pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of that examination, the School may recover the entry fee for that examination from the pupil's parents.

In all cases where a compulsory charge will be made by the school, parents will be told the amount in advance and whether statutory or voluntary remission is available for all or part of the compulsory charge. The charge made will reflect the actual cost to the School on a proportionate basis per student.

There are complicated formulae for calculating whether an activity, trip or residential visit which takes place partly during and partly outside school hours will be deemed to take place during or outside school hours. Where applicable, this will be confirmed in the letter sent to parents.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Optional extras, for example extra-curricular activities, clubs or tuition which are offered by the School outside school hours and are not part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus of a prescribed public examination or part of statutory religious education, will be subject to a compulsory charge by the School.

Parents will be notified of the compulsory charge in advance and will be asked to provide their consent to pay the compulsory charges before their child will be permitted to take part in the optional extra. The charge made will reflect the actual cost to the School on a proportionate basis per student.

For the avoidance of doubt, whether a student takes part in an optional extra for which a compulsory charge is to be made is entirely a matter for parents to decide. No optional extras are compulsory for students to take part in.

VOLUNTARY PAYMENTS

The School is permitted to request a voluntary payment for any activity, visit or trip whether it takes place during or outside school hours.

Parents will be notified of the requested voluntary payment in advance and, where the amount requested consists of a combination of compulsory charges and voluntary payments, this will be made clear. The charge made will reflect the actual cost to the School on a proportionate basis per student.

No student will be excluded from an activity, trip or visit because their parent has chosen not to make the voluntary payment. However, parents should be aware that the School has a limited budget and the activity, trip or visit may have to be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. If this is the case, parents will be notified that this will happen in the letter requesting the voluntary payment.

SALE OF ITEMS BY THE SCHOOL

To actively engage in learning, be ready to learn and be able to learn in many different contexts, it is essential that students have the correct clothing and basic equipment, including the school uniform, pens, pencils, rulers, calculators, etc.

Parents are expected to send their children to the School with these items, however the School may also offer for sale some items of equipment on an optional basis. The charge made for these items will reflect the appropriate cost to the School.

The School may also offer for sale some items of equipment on an optional basis e.g. water bottles. The charge made for these items will reflect the actual cost to the School

PHOTOCOPYING AND PRINTING CHARGES

Photocopying and/or printing carried out by the School for a student which has not been requested by a member of staff will be charged for.

LOSS OF OR DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

The School will seek payment from parents for any loss of or damage to property belonging to the School which has been caused deliberately or negligently by their child.

STATUTORY REMISSION

The Act provides a remission scheme for the compulsory charge made for board and lodging on residential visits which either take place during (or mainly during) school hours, or are provided as part of the national curriculum, the syllabus for a prescribed examination or statutory religious education. In these cases, the School will fund the board and lodging element of these residential visits for those students who are eligible for statutory remission.

For the avoidance of doubt, statutory remission is **not** available for the cost of board and lodging for visits which take place outside (or mainly outside) school hours.

Parents will be eligible for statutory remission if they are in receipt of any of the following:

- Income support;
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance;
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £16,190;
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999;
- The 'Guaranteed Element' of Pension Credit; or
- Universal Credit, in certain prescribed circumstances.

Where the statutory remission scheme applies to a visit, details of the scheme and applicability will be set out in the letter notifying parents about the visit.

THE SCHOOL'S SUPPORT FUND (VOLUNTARY REMISSION)

The School may set up a Support Fund to assist parents in paying the cost involved for activities, trips and visits etc.

The terms of the Support Fund will be decided by the School.

Complete confidentiality will be observed at all times.

PAYMENT BY INSTALMENTS

In order to assist parents with budgeting, the School will consider allowing parents to make payments of compulsory charges and voluntary payments by instalments, provided that all instalments have been received before the element of the activity, trip or visit to which the instalment relates must be paid by the School.

Where instalments are offered, this will be set out in the letter to parents, together with confirmation as to which element of the cost each instalment relates. Where a combination of compulsory charges and voluntary payments have been requested, the instalments will be structured so that the voluntary payments are made first, followed by the compulsory charges. This is because the School is able to recover unpaid compulsory charges from parents in the civil courts where the School has incurred costs on a non-refundable basis, whereas unpaid voluntary payments cannot be recovered even where the School has incurred non-refundable costs after receiving confirmation from parents that the voluntary payments will be made.

Where some instalments are received, and further instalments are not forthcoming, the School will not refund any part of the payments received for which refunds cannot be obtained by the School from the provider of that element of the activity, trip or visit.

REFUNDS

A refund of a compulsory charge or voluntary payment received will be made only where the following circumstances apply:

- The activity, trip or visit was cancelled due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and/or his parents;
- The School made a decision that the student will not take part in an activity, trip or visit for any reason. Where this is as a result of the student's behaviour, the refund will be reduced by the amount of any costs already incurred by the School;
- Where a student is awarded a higher grade following an application for a re-mark which was funded by a parent (in these circumstances, the fee will be reimbursed by the relevant examination board).

Refunds may also be made in some other limited exceptional circumstances, at the sole discretion of the School.