

Charging for school activities (Charging and Remissions)



King Henry VIII 3-19 School Ysgol 3-19 Brenin Harri'r VIII

We believe in the limitless capacity for everyone to achieve great things.

Effective from: January 2025

Approved by Governors: January 2025

Next Review Due: January 2026

Introduction

We believe in the limitless capacity for everyone to achieve great things. Achieving this vision requires ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in all activities offered, and that access to educational enrichment is not determined by economic factors.

The purpose of this policy is to set out what charges can and cannot be made for activities in King Henry VIII 3-19 School. The policy has been drawn up in accordance with Sections 449-462 of The Education Act 1996 which sets out the law regarding what charges can and cannot be made for activities in schools maintained by Local Authorities.

We believe in providing a programme of enrichment activities to enhance and support the learning of all our pupils, adding to their enjoyment and understanding of topics and learning experiences. Many of the enhanced activities unfortunately have an associated cost, and due to budgetary constraints, the school is unable to provide them free of charge. However, we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from these enhanced learning experiences independent of their parents' financial means.

This policy gives clarity over:

- The items which are provided free
- The items that will be funded by a voluntary contribution (an optional payment required from parents/carers)
- When there will be a charge (a payment required from parents/carers)
- How costs are calculated
- How we try and make paying for items manageable for parents/carers
- How we will assist those with a limited income

1. Education

All education during the school day¹ is free.

This includes:

- examination fees (whereby the pupil has prepared for the examinations in school)
- examination re-sits (whereby a pupil has prepared in school)
- subject text books
- learning resources such as exercise books and subject specific [such as, science laboratory] equipment

2. Optional Extras

A charge will be made for items relating to activities that take place mainly out of school time or are not an essential part of the curriculum.

Optional extras that are of high value will firstly be advertised for expressions of interest, with a date by which a deposit should be paid. In organising the optional extra, a non-refundable deposit² will be required from all Parents/Carers to secure bookings by the date given by the school. Parents whose children are eligible for Free School Meals could be entitled to some subsidy of the remainder of the cost.

3. Educational School Visits

We do not charge for any activity undertaken as an essential part of the Curriculum.

Should there be a residential trip that is an essential part of the curriculum, the school is able to charge for the element of board and lodging, unless the Parent/Carer is in receipt of certain benefits. This can be discussed further with the School Business Manager.

The school however, is able to request voluntary contributions from parents/carers. We do however, as far as possible, use school funding and grants to cover as many costs as possible. There is no legal obligation to make a voluntary contribution. Pupils will not be excluded through parent/carers inability or unwillingness to pay. Pupils whose parent/carers cannot contribute will not be treated any differently. If the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions (and it is unable to fund the activity), the activity may need to be cancelled.

4. Other Charges

Loss and Damage of School Property:

Parent/carers of a pupil who loses or wilfully damages any item of school property, are liable for the costs of repair or replacement. Any matter involving damage or loss of school property will be

¹ The school day is defined by the start time and finishing times published by the school.

² Non-refundable unless the school or relevant outside agency decide to cancel the event.

investigated and discussed with parents. A valuation for the cost of replacement or repair will be given and agreement sought about the timescale for the repair/replacement.

Music Tuition:

Individual and small group instrumental and vocal tuition is available in school through Gwent Music and other independent organisations. Tuition in these circumstances should be organised with, and paid directly to, the provider. Any music activity organised by the school to enhance the curriculum will be funded through voluntary contributions.

Examination Fees:

The school may charge for examination fees where the following apply:

- The pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- The examination the pupil is arranged to take, does not appear on a prescribed list

5. How costs are calculated

When calculating the costs, the school can include the cost of the activity, transport, overnight costs, materials or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra, costs of non-teaching staff, costs of supply engaged to enable the school to provide the optional extra and any administrative fees (for example Parent Pay charges). A breakdown of these costs will be explained to Parents/Carers.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided by the number of pupils participating. The cost of the activity will not include any element of subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity and whose parents are unable to pay the full charge.

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

Parent Pay Charges:

The school reserves the right to pass on the transaction charges for the use of Parent Pay to parents as part of voluntary contributions and charging. These costs are 1.28% of the payment amount. The Governing Body has agreed not to pass on costs from ParentPay to parents for the costs of booking school meals and breakfast club. The school uses ParentPay as the cashless system and charges cannot be avoided as all payments should be made using it. Any parents who wish to not pay online can request a payment card and make payments using their local PayPoint (at shops and Post Offices).

Refunds:

In the event an activity makes an unexpected surplus, the school will consider making a refund if the surplus is either (a) 5% or more of the total cost per person (b) £5 or more per person. Parents will be offered the refund and must contact the Finance Office to claim the refund, which shall be made through ParentPay. Any refunds not claimed will be put towards the school's fund. If a parent requests a refund for a contribution they have already made, it may be done so in full or in part, at the discretion of the School Business Manager, dependent upon the circumstances.

5. How we try and make paying for items manageable

The school raises money through events and this helps to subsidise activities. We report annually through the Chair of Governor's report as to how the school's budget is spent.

The school recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we try to adhere to the following:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of activities (and their approximate costs) at the beginning of each term and residential trips at the beginning of the academic year
- We will allow parents to pay in instalments
- When the opportunity for a trip arises at short notice, it will be possible to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We will not offer "first pay, first allocated" opportunities as this discriminates against pupils from families who are struggling financially and instead offer expressions of interest registration with payment of a deposit at a later (specified) date

6. Assisting those with a limited income (remissions)

Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals, in most circumstances, will be able to participate in activities at reduced rates. An allocation of 2% of the age weighted pupil funding for each eligible pupil is available to help towards the costs of optional extras.

In cases of hardship the Governors will consider in their absolute discretion the remission of fees (either in full or in part) for those pupils who they consider will benefit from activities. In certain circumstances part or whole of the charges for activities may be waived if hardship is being experienced by the family that are not eligible for Free School Meals.

Parents should discuss the matter with the School Business Manager in the first instance. In some cases, the school may apply to other bodies and agencies to subsidise or remit the charges for enrichment activities.