

The Vineyard

Charging and Remissions

Policy



Approved by:

Resources Committee

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Next review due by:

October 2024

THE VINEYARD CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Charging and Remissions Policy

Aims

The Vineyard school aims to:

- Have robust clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities.

This policy is based on advice from the DfE Charging for school activities May 2018 and the Education Act 1996.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure:

- staff are familiar with and correctly apply the procedures set out in this policy;
- the School Business Manager is advised of any proposed changes to policy;
- changes in legislation and guidance are promptly incorporated into this policy;
- parents / carers are able to discuss charges and remissions with the Headteacher and/or School Business Manager in private and in confidence.

Activities without charge

There will be no charge for the following activities:

- education provided wholly or mostly during school hours and that is part of the National Curriculum. This includes the supply of any materials, books, instruments, other equipment and also transport provided in school hours to carry pupils between the school and an activity;
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum;
- instrumental and vocal music tuition which is part of the National Curriculum;
- a non-residential activity that happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it and that is part of the National Curriculum.

Chargeable activities

The School may recover the full costs of the following activities / materials which may be provided directly or through commissioned services but charges will not exceed actual cost:

- educational or other activities provided wholly or mainly outside school hours which are not part of the National Curriculum;
- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child will own them;
- board and lodgings on residential visits (subject to remission arrangements);
- provision of individual or group instrumental and vocal tuition, which takes place during the school day and which has been requested by parents / carers.

Voluntary contributions

The restrictions on charging for school activities do not in any way prohibit the school from seeking voluntary contributions in support of any school activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential. The school may ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of school-time activities to assist with funding, subject to the following conditions:

- parents will be informed at the outset that there is no obligation to pay for a particular activity;
- any children of parents who do not wish to contribute will not be treated any differently;
- where there are insufficient contributions to make the activity viable then the activity will be cancelled;
- details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents are informed of charges for individual activities. Whenever possible, the school will give sufficient notice to allow parents / carers to pay by instalments.

Optional Extras

Activities outside of normal lesson times and not within the National Curriculum (e.g., music events, activity clubs, extended care and other similar activities) are classed as 'optional extras'. Parents may be asked to meet the full cost of these activities. For those activities run by the school, the school will do its best to offer assistance or remission of charges in any case where there is hardship.

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For school 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. It will not 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 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;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching staff;
- 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.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

Residential Trips

We offer residential trips to pupils in Key Stage 2. For residential trips during normal school hours, parents will be informed about costs and how they have been calculated and asked to meet the full cost of board and lodging and to make a voluntary contribution towards any travel expenses. The school will meet the costs for students whose parents receive income support benefits, where it is still possible for the visit to go ahead. The school will do its best to offer assistance and remissions in any case where there is hardship.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

School trips refunds

- In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the School Business Manager's discretion as to whether contributions are refunded or put forward to the rearranged trip.
- In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the School Business Manager's discretion as to whether a refund is given.
- In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the School Business Manager's discretion as to whether a refund is given.
- The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.
- If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Policy.

Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.

There is a charge for individual or small-group music tuition provided by an external provider as an additional curriculum activity, and not part of the National Curriculum. These individual or small-group lessons are taught by peripatetic music teachers. We give parents information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year. Payments for lessons must be received in advance and are made directly to the provider.

Swimming

The school organises swimming lessons for children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. However, given the high costs of providing tuition, pool hire and transport, the school will seek a voluntary contribution from parents to contribute to the costs. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place.

School meals

All children from Reception to the end of Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal.

All meals to KS2 (Years 3-6) children are free in the 2023/24 academic year following the Mayor of London initiative.

Wrap around care

We provide term-time morning and after school care through partnership with an external childcare provider. Parents will be charged for use of this service directly by the external provider.

Activity clubs

Pupils of The Vineyard are able to attend a large number of activity clubs outside the school day which may be run either by the school or by external providers. The school or external provider makes a charge for these

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clubs which are paid directly to the school or provider. Fees for these clubs are paid in advance at the time of booking for the full term and any refunds are at the discretion of the provider.

Requests for Reports of Pupils by Independent and non-Maintained Schools

The school will charge parents for each completed request from a private school for a written report of a pupil's aptitude, attainment and other relevant information, where the request is not simply for the most recent Vineyard school report for that pupil.

The charge will be as determined by the Governing Body, and is currently set at £75 per initial request and £50 for subsequent requests. However, a copy of the most recent The Vineyard school report for a child will be provided free of charge.

Request to sit practice tests and private school exam entry at The Vineyard

If requested, the school will allow children to sit such tests at school for a fee, currently set by the Governing Body at £150 per child. The school needs to open its facilities on a weekend and incurs additional staffing costs (e.g, premises team, invigilators) and premises costs (use of utilities, cleaning).

Confirmation letters

The school will charge parents £15 for confirmation of their child's place at school (for visa, passport renewal requests etc).

Malicious damage

Where it can be proved that a child or group of children have caused damage to school property or resources, a charge will be made to parents in order to replace/mend the damage that has been caused. This can include damage to reading books and other equipment children may take home.

Payment procedures

In order to reduce administration for families and to avoid numerous ad-hoc donations, we request that voluntary contributions for all activities and trips for the academic year, excluding any residential trips, be made in one payment at the start of the academic year. Families can request to spread the payment over 3 instalments, made at the start of each term. Parents in receipt of free school meals or who fall into the 'remissions' categories below can be exempted from the contribution.

Voluntary Contribution to 'Friends of the Vineyard' (FoV)

The Vineyard Governing board encourages additional voluntary contributions to be paid into 'The Friends of the Vineyard' FoV fund. These payments are used to support purchases for the school's libraries, pupils' art materials, sports equipment, IT as well as contributing towards our longer-term projects - we are currently investigating the ability to use the school field all year round by turning part of it into a multi-use games area. All these areas enhance the experience of school that our pupils will have. The Friends of the Vineyard is an important source of funds for the school so please support it if you possibly can. The FoV can reclaim an additional 25p of tax for every £1 paid (applicable only for UK taxpayers).

Remissions

Pupils whose parents can prove that they are eligible for free school meals because they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed the limit set by HMRC;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get);
- Any similar income related employment and support allowances introduced by the Government.

Charges for other chargeable activities may also be fully or partly remitted. Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents are informed of charges for individual activities.