



Charging Policy

Introduction

College Governors have to make clear to everyone what can and cannot be charged for. The basic principle laid down by the Department for Education is:

“Any educational activity which is deemed sufficiently important to take up valuable college time should be free to all students regardless of their parents’ ability to pay”.

Aims

1. To meet the requirements in Section 106-111 and 117-118 of the Education Reform Act 1988 as interpreted by Circular 2/89 and subsequent directives and to take cognisance of the Local Authority’s (LA’s) Policies for Charging and Remissions.
2. To make sure that no charges are made for activities that are part of an examination syllabus prescribed by the Secretary of State for Education or the National Curriculum or R.E.
3. To make charges for:
 - (i) the actual cost of Board and Lodging visits involving overnight stay;
 - (ii) the full cost of any voluntary activity which takes place out of college hours;
 - (iii) the full cost of lessons in musical instruments, including tuition, sheet music and hire or cost of instrument, asked for by parents/carers, whether they are in or out of college hours;
 - (iv) the full cost, including administration, of entry for exams:
 - (a) not prescribed by the Education Secretary;
 - (b) for which the college has not prepared a student;
 - (c) that the college has said a student should not be entered for;
 - (d) paid for by the college but where a student fails to do all parts of the exam;
 - (v) the actual costs of putting right damage, loss or defacement of college buildings and equipment;
 - (vi) the actual cost of materials used in practical subjects where the parent/carer or student wants to keep or use what is made;
 - (vii) The actual cost of extra copies of documents requested by parents and others, including the LA’s Statement of Curriculum Policy and Aims and the Governors’ version of the same and other general information like schemes of work and syllabuses.

4. To expect parents/carers to provide suitable clothing and equipment where it is needed for special activities.
5. To provide the best possible educational opportunities by giving, when requested, parents/carers who are willing and able the chance to help with the cost of:
 - (i) travel, expenses, entrance fees, costs of non-teaching staff, etc. for activities in college time;
 - (ii) materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in the college's programme.
6. To make sure that in the cost of all voluntary contributions:
 - (i) no student is stopped from taking part in any activity because their parent/carer could not, or did not want to, contribute;
 - (ii) parents/carers are fully informed in writing that contributions are voluntary and that 6(i) will apply.

Broad Guidelines

1. The Charging Policy has to take cognisance of the policies on, and college arrangements for, remissions, length and times of college sessions, examination entry and discipline.
2. The policy will need to be kept up to date and in line with changes and interpretations in the law and LA policy.
3. A voluntary activity which takes place out of college is:
 - (i) a day trip where over half is out of the agreed college hours;
 - (ii) a residential trip (one night or more away from home) where over half the number of sessions are not college ones. Each day counts as two sessions.
4. Parents/carers may ask the college to grant their sons/daughters leave of absence to join an activity organised by a third party like a tour or theatre company during college hours. So long as the statutory duties of the Governors and the Headteacher relating to the college curriculum, health and safety of students and the Education (Colleges and Further Education) Regulations are carried out, the third party will be allowed to charge for the services they are providing.
5. Charges for voluntary activities can take account of the costs, including expenses, of engaging staff to provide an activity. If they are already employed as teachers by the LA or Governors their costs may not be passed on to students unless they are employed:
 - (i) to provide individual musical tuition;
 - (ii) on a separate contract to help provide the activity.
6. Transport cannot normally be charged for but parents/carers may be asked to make voluntary contributions if their son/daughter uses transport not provided by the LA or college to any activity they have given permission for e.g. Work Experience.
7. Charges for damage, loss or defacement of college buildings and property will only be made if the college believes they were not accidental.

8. Parents/carers will be asked to say in writing whether they, or their son/daughter, wish to have what has been made in practical subjects, like Technology, before the course begins.
9. Special activities for which students are expected to have suitable clothing include: P.E., Science, Art, Technology. Clothing or equipment for safety purposes will be provided by the college.
10. The level and use of voluntary contributions is not limited e.g. they can be used to subsidise students from low income families or costs of accompanying teachers.
11. If it is made clear from the outset, whether an activity takes place can be made dependant on sufficient voluntary contributions being received, so long as all other requirements relating to such monies are met.
12. Whilst retaining the right to charge for individual music tuition, the Governors will allocate funds annually to support that activity. When, or if, these funds prove insufficient charges may be made.

Conclusion

Without a great increase in money available to colleges, some contributions from parents/carers will be needed. They must be made in such a way as to enrich all students' college work without penalising anyone whose parents/carers cannot, or will not, pay.

Reviewed Spring Term 2015