



Granville Sports College is committed to:

- Raising standards of achievement and creating opportunities for all pupils, regardless of needs to develop their full potential and improve their life chances
- Raising the aspirations of the whole school community by creating a culture of continuous learning that celebrates success at all levels.
- Developing a school that is the pride of the local area where pupils, parents, staff, governors and wider community feel valued, listened to and welcomed for the diverse contribution they make to our school life.

Charging and remissions policy

Co-ordinator: Jo Kingswood (Head Teacher)
Start date: October 2016
Review date: October 2018

Introduction

The Governing Board of Granville Sports College is committed to providing the best education for all pupils. It recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities that the school provides, e.g. clubs, trips, residential etc. can make towards the all-round educational experience and personal and social development of our pupils.

This policy has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, which contains the legislation on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England, and section 27 of the Education Act 2002, which enables Governing Bodies of maintained schools to provide community facilities and to charge for some of those services.

The governors endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child should have its access to the curriculum limited by charges.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of the policy is to set out what charges Granville Sports College will levy for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested.

This policy aims to make a broad programme of trips and activities accessible to as many students as possible and to establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the school budget.

Definitions of terms in this policy

School day

For the purposes of this policy the school day is defined as starting at 8.30 am until finishing at 2.45 p.m. The midday break does not form part of the school day.

Parent

Throughout this policy the term “parent” refers to all those having parental responsibility for a pupil.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A “half day” means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1: Visit during school hours

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Responsibilities

The Governing Board of Granville Sports College is responsible for determining the content of this policy and the Headteacher for its implementation. Any determination with respect to individual parents will be considered jointly by the Headteacher and the Governing Board.

Instances where Granville Sports College cannot make a charge

The Governing Board recognises that legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school¹.
¹ However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents. Please refer to the school policies relating to examinations.
- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and

- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.
- 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education and supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupil on a residential visit.

Instances where Granville Sports College can make a charge

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Where pupils have deliberately or negligently damaged or vandalised school property or equipment, the cost of the repair or replacement work will be passed on to the parents. Parents may be expected to replace or purchase items of lost school property.
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see detail below)

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s).

Optional extras for which a charge can be made

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - part of the National Curriculum;

- part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
 - transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and
 - board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

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;
- 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; and
- 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.

Granville Sports College guarantees that charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. We will therefore never include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore, in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge will not include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, we will make no charge made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Activities where we may request a voluntary contribution

Parents will be invited to make a voluntary contribution for any activities or provision organised for the benefit of pupils where it is inappropriate to make a charge.

The terms of any request made to parents will specify that it is a voluntary contribution and in no way represents a charge. In addition the following will be made clear to parents:

- a) that the parent is under no obligation to pay;
- b) that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parent has made any contribution in response to the request;
- c) initial letters will explain the nature of the proposed activity and its likely value in educational terms;
- d) the letter will indicate the voluntary contribution per pupil which would be required for the activity to take place;
- e) if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions then this will be made clear at the outset;
- f) it will also be made clear in the letter that if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund the activity then it may be cancelled;
- g) insurance costs for any activity will be included in the voluntary contribution

- The Governing Board will delegate the level of voluntary contributions for each activity to the Headteacher.

Activities where voluntary contributions may be requested include:

- **Trips**

Even if these are for National Curriculum or exam board specification reasons Granville Sports College is not precluded from inviting parents to make voluntary contributions.

- **Minibus**

We will only invite voluntary contributions that will cover the actual costs incurred, including fuel and depreciation; the service will not make a profit for the school.

Voluntary contributions will not be invited for pupils travelling in the minibus when they are attending fixtures because they have been selected to represent Granville Sports College.

- **Art, Food and Design Technology**

Often ingredients and materials are needed for practical lessons and parents are invited to provide these as long as they have indicated a willingness to be in receipt of the final product beforehand. No pupil will be disadvantaged, however, by an inability to pay.

Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents. The school is entitled to cancel the trip if the level of contributions does not meet its budgetary requirements.

Remission

Children whose parents are entitled to claim Free School Meals or Pupil Premium Pupils will be entitled to the remission of charges for school trips plus the remission of other charges such as for Art and Design Technology materials.

Free School Meal entitlement is for families who receive:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

(The Government is in the process of making substantial changes to the benefit system in England. Therefore the information above may well change during the lifetime of this policy)

Parents in receipt of the benefits outlined above will be considered as first priority for assistance.

Individual cases of financial difficulty

The Governing Body may remit charges in full, or in part, to other parents after consideration of the specifics of their hardship. Requests for financial assistance should be made in writing to the Headteacher upon receipt of the letter outlining the details of the activity, or as soon as parents are aware that an activity is to take place. All requests will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

In response to such requests the following may apply:

- The Headteacher may be able to agree flexible, extended payment terms;
- Parents may be able to ask for assistance from the hardship fund which operates independently from other funds;
- In most cases, parents will be asked to bear a proportion of the cost of the activity etc. This is usually 50%. **We will contribute** to a maximum of £50;
- All cases will be treated individually.

The Headteacher will authorise remission in consultation with the Governing Board.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Governing Board will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness across the whole school.

Signed Jo Kingswood (Head), Date.....

Signed David Gaskin (Chair of FGB), Date.....

Appendix – Frequently asked questions

Q What is a charging policy?

A Under the charging provisions set out in legislation, governing bodies and local authorities of maintained schools may choose to charge for certain defined activities, but only if they have first drawn-up charging and remissions policies. These policies should be made available to parents on request.

Q A visit involving staying overnight has been arranged for children at my school. Can the school charge for this?

A Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home the school is allowed to make a charge for board and lodging. This is with the exception of pupils whose parents are receiving: Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit and have an annual gross income, assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190 FY 14/15) and an income related employment and support allowance. Since April 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria. The head teacher must inform all parents of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving these benefits.

(The Government is in the process of making substantial changes to the benefit system in England. Therefore the information above may well change during the lifetime of this policy)

Q. With regard to the remission of board & lodging payments, can you please explain who pays for the expense, would it come out of the school budget or is there a grant available to claim?

A Although the criteria for being eligible for the remission of charges for board and lodgings is the same as free school meals, that is where the similarity ends. The costs involved in the remission of board and lodgings are to be borne by the school from their contingency funds. There is no return to be completed to re-claim the money.

Q Our school has a large number of pupils eligible for free school meals, this means that they would also receive remission for board and lodgings expenses for residential school visits. How can the school fund/organize residential visits?

A The government provides funding for schools to each local authority according to a formula which recognises the different needs of each area. The same basic funding is provided for all comparable pupils across the country. This is then topped up according to local needs.

One of these top-ups reflects the numbers of pupils in a certain area living in deprived circumstances, as these pupils need extra help if they are to have an equal opportunity in life. The amount that individual schools receive from the local authority reflects their relative need compared with other local schools, through the locally agreed funding formula. All local authorities' funding formulae are required to include an element to reflect the needs of deprived pupils. It is for head teachers and school governing bodies to decide how to spend their available resources.

Schools cannot exclude children from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make, a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

If there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

Q Can governing bodies charge for educating children in maintained schools?

A. The local authority or governing body cannot charge for education that takes place in school hours. Nor can they charge for activities that take place outside school hours if these are part of the National Curriculum, necessary as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. They can charge for permitted 'optional extras', provided they have drawn up a statement of general policy on charging and given details of 'optional extras' they intend to charge for. The governing body's policy does not have to be the same as the local authority's policy, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

Q Can a school charge for an activity that takes place out of school hours?

This kind of activity is often referred to as an 'optional extra'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. See guidance on optional extras.

A The actual charge for the optional extra cannot exceed the actual cost of the provision. Schools cannot and must not make a profit from charging for optional extras. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Q Can a school ask parents for voluntary contributions?

A Schools may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. It should be remembered that education provided during school hours must be free. This includes materials, equipment, and transport provided in school hours by the local authority or by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. Governing bodies should also clearly explain that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently, and that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

Q The school has sent letters out to parents asking for contributions towards a school visit, do parents have to pay?

A Head teachers or governing bodies may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;

- school equipment; and
- school funds generally.

Children of parents who are unable, or unwilling, to contribute may not be discriminated against. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of the visit, or activity, and there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall, then the school should cancel the activity/visit. It would be advisable to make parents aware of a possible cancellation to the activity/visit if insufficient voluntary contributions are received from the outset.

Q What happens if the school is not able to raise enough voluntary contributions to cover costs?

A Where there are not enough voluntary contributions, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, for example school funds and/or fundraising activities, then it must be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions should be made clear in the information sent to parents.

Q What if a parent is unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution? How does this affect their child(ren)?

A The school cannot exclude a child from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

Q What support can a school offer a parent/carers who has difficulty making a financial contribution?

A Schools must ensure that parents in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers 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 £16,190 (Financial Year 2014/15). Some schools also have funds available to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. Parents should be encouraged to speak to the head teacher in order to establish if such funding arrangements exist.

No charge may be made if there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination. In addition, if the activity is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel for any pupil, not just those whose parents are in receipt of benefits.

Q What about charges for transport during school hours?

A Any transport provided by the school in school hours will be provided free of charge (though a voluntary contribution could be requested).

Q Can the school charge for something like cooking ingredients or materials needed for a technology lesson?

A The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

Q Can the school charge entry fees for examinations?

A An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it; and
- a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Q. Can a school make a charge to pay for the administration required as part of the admission process?

A. Para 1.82 of the current School Admissions Code and para 1.93 of the revised School Admissions Code (which comes into force in February 2009) rules out practices that can lead to covert selection, such as asking parents for a financial contribution as a condition of entry. We are clear that schools cannot ask for a voluntary contribution as part of the admissions process and where this is found, we will not tolerate it. Legislation prevents maintained schools from charging fees for admission or for providing education during school hours.

Q. Can a school ask for a direct debit to the school fund?

A. No. A school may ask for voluntary contributions, as long as it is clear that they are voluntary, but we are clear that state education should be free and we have no intention of changing this policy. We will not tolerate this when it is brought to our notice. No contributions may be sought as part of the admissions process.

