



Charging Policy

Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows DfE regulations and guidance. All members of staff are affected by and expected to adhere to this policy.

In line with the College's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of the college life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of our aim for children to have the support they need:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families;
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs
- to use preventative measures to help students to avoid the possibility of failure

This policy is founded in the College's commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the College community. It reflects the College's commitment to safeguard children, as well to encourage diversity in all aspects of College life.

Foreword

Rooks Heath College is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. This policy is formulated by the Associate Headteacher and Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with staff and is monitored by other members of the College's Leadership and Management Group. The policy is subject to annual review by the College's Leadership and Management Group and is subject to approval by the governors of the College.

Objectives of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Rooks Heath students have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It replaces any previous policy on Charging and was informed by DfE advice on charging for school activities, and Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 which sets out the law on charging for activities in maintained schools, and which all academies must comply with through their funding agreements.

This policy complements the College policies on Equal Opportunities, Off Site Activities, Curriculum and Teaching and Learning. This charging policy has been formulated to sit within the College development plan and reflects the Government's statutory policy.

General

Wherever charging is permitted, the charge will not exceed the actual cost of the provision of the activity. The calculation of all charges will be available to those with parental responsibility.

Approved Examinations

All fees for approved examinations will be provided free of charge, at Rooks Heath College curriculum subjects. One GCSE home language examination will also be provided free of charge. Any subsequent GCSE home language examination and all A-Level home language examinations will be chargeable. Students will be required to pay for re-sit entries except in exceptional circumstances or where the current legislation in force require Rooks Heath College to pay.

The College day

For this document the College day is defined as all the activities that take place in either the morning or afternoon sessions. The morning session is from 8:45am until 12:25pm and the afternoon session is from 1:10pm until 3:10pm.

In any case where charging is permitted (see below), the charge will not exceed the actual cost of the activity.

During the College day

All activities that are a necessary part of the College curriculum will be provided free of charge for students up to and including Year 11. This includes materials, equipment and any transport to take students to and from a timetabled activity. The only exception is that

a charge may be made for teaching an individual, or groups of up to four students, a musical instrument.

Activities during the College Day

Minimum voluntary contributions may be sought from those with parental responsibility for activities during the College day that entail additional costs. Examples of such activities include visiting artists and theatre groups and off site activities (or trips). In all such circumstances no student will be omitted from an activity because the person with parental responsibility cannot or will not make a contribution. However, if an activity/event fails to raise sufficient voluntary contributions to cover costs, the activity/event will be cancelled.

Occasionally Rooks Heath may invite external organisations to arrange an activity in College during the College day. Such organisations may wish to make a charge and the College will request this as a voluntary contribution. Wherever possible the College will include all students in such events, regardless of the contribution made, to ensure that financial hardship does not have a negative impact on student participation. Alternatively, parents and carers may ask the Headteacher to allow their child to miss such an activity. In such cases they can expect an alternative programme, organised by the department concerned, to be provided.

Optional activities outside of the College day

For optional activities held outside of the College day, voluntary contributions may be sought from those with parental responsibility. Alternatively, the department organising the activity has the option of using department funds to cover the costs.

Residential activities

Special rules apply for residential activities. A trip counts as falling within College time if the number of College sessions missed by the students amounts to half or more of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. Each College day is divided into two sessions and each 24 hour period is divided into two half-days beginning at noon and at midnight. If 50% or more of a half-day is spent on a residential trip, then the whole of that half-day counts as spent on the trip.

Offsite activity leaders can impose a charge for the board and lodging element of residential activities, except where students qualify for Free School Meals.

Those with parental responsibility will be told of the right to remission of charges for board and lodging if their child is entitled to a Free School Meal. The cost must be borne from any contingency fund.

A similar entitlement applies where the trip takes place outside of College hours if:

- it is necessary as part of the National Curriculum,
- forms part of the syllabus for prescribed examination that the College is preparing the student to sit,
- forms part of the syllabus for religious education.

Rooks Heath College – Charging Policy

It should be noted that Looked after Children can usually have the cost of an educational activity paid for from funds received from the Local Authority.

Medical fees whilst abroad

Parents and carers will be held accountable for any additional medical fees incurred on an offsite activity that are not covered by the local authority insurance.

College mini-bus

Only Rooks Heath students, staff or parents may travel at a charge in the College mini-buses when used for a school trip. Charges will only cover actual costs incurred, including depreciation. In special circumstances the Headteacher may agree to allow the transportation of students at other schools. In these circumstances, the Finance Manager must agree the charges with the school concerned beforehand.

Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity covered by this policy, they will be based upon costs incurred, divided by the total number of students participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot. Those who may qualify for support are those who are entitled to a Free School Meal.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the College and/or charges to those with parental responsibility.

Curriculum Resources

When curriculum departments make resources such as revision booklets available to students, charges may be made to cover net costs only. Income must be passed to the Finance Office and banked.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Audit and Risk Committee of the Local Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on an annual basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (anonymous) and the source of those subsidies. The same group will be responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy.