

St Benedict's Catholic College



Charges, Refunds and Remissions Policy

Date reviewed	November 2020
Approved by Governors	May 2021
Date of next review	May 2024

Introduction

St Benedict's Catholic College is committed to the general principle of free education and recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including school visits and residential experiences, can make towards all aspects of students' education. We also believe that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from college activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parent's financial means.

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

- where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the academic year so that parents can plan ahead
- we will establish a system for parents to pay in instalments for more expensive trips and if parents wish to request an instalment method for other trips, they can contact the college to arrange this
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools & colleges may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The law states:

- if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Governing Body or Principal will make this clear to parents from the outset
- no child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay
- if insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled
- if a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit

Charging Policy

School Meals: All food and drink items will be chargeable. Free School Meals students will be allocated a daily meal allowance.

Educational visits & Residential activities: The College will seek voluntary contributions from parents/carers where applicable. No student will be prevented from participating in an activity during the college day on financial grounds. Where 10% or more of parents decline to make the requested voluntary contribution (their identity will remain confidential), or the contributions shortfall is £50 or more, then the visit or activity will not take place. The costs of residential

activities can be high and such activities may only continue to be available if sufficient costs are recovered. The following items will be charged for:

- travel costs – transport to and from the residential activity
- board and lodging - full cost of board and lodging on residential trips whether or not it takes place during school hours
- costs of supply staff engaged to cover the staff accompanying students on a residential trip where the trip takes place during term time
- full cost recovery for residential activities that take place outside of school hours

No charge will be made for:

- education costs incurred on any visit during school hours
- education costs incurred on any visit outside school hours if it is part of the school's curriculum

Music Tuition: Instrumental tuition or singing lessons do not form part of the curriculum but are an additional activity arranged by the college and delivered by specialist tutors either on an individual basis or as part of a group, following parental request. The cost of such lessons is dependent on the charges applied by the tutors, the size of the group, the duration and frequency of each lesson. The school operates on full cost recovery basis.

Examination fees:

Charges will not apply when:

- an examination is part of the curriculum
- an examination is on the college's set examinations list and a student has been prepared for that examination by the college
- the student wishes to re-sit an examination and the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the college. However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge may be made

Charges do apply when:

- the student has not been prepared for the examination by the college

Examination re-marks:

- If the college requests the examination to be re-marked the charge will not apply
- If the re-mark is at the request of the student or parent/carer, the charge will apply

Activities outside college hours: the college will endeavour to provide a range of such activities from time to time. These are known generally as 'optional extras'. Charges may be made for these activities EXCEPT where they are provided to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or are required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education in which case they are not regarded as optional extras as such and charges cannot be made.

Other areas:

Charges will apply for:

- books and materials belonging to the college that a student has lost
- books and materials that a parent/carer wishes a student to keep after having been advised of the cost
- property damage – each individual case to be decided upon by the Principal
 - full repair costs incurred as a result of wilful or reckless damage to college property by a student or parent/carer
 - full recovery of costs incurred by the college as a result of damage caused by a student to third party property

No charges will apply for:

- activities taking place during college hours except any of those listed above
- transport during college hours for college-organised activities except for educational visits as detailed above
- activities outside college hours that are part of the
 - set curriculum including sports matches against other schools / academies
 - syllabus for a public examination that the student is being prepared for by the college
 - our basic religious education syllabus
- admissions
- DBS checks required by the college for employees or volunteers

Refunds Policy

School Meals: Any unspent balance held on the cashless catering system will be refunded upon request.

Educational visits & Residential activities: When a student is absent due to illness and does not attend an educational/activity visit, the costs will not be refunded. However, the college will endeavour to recover costs related to that activity and, if successful, will then refund the parent/carer. If a visit has to be cancelled by the college, parental contributions will be refunded, less any initial deposits withheld by the venue. Where contributions for an activity exceed the final total cost by more than £5 per pupil, a refund will be given. Excess income less than £5 per pupil will be retained in school funds. Excess expenditure will be paid from school funds.

Music Tuition: Where instrumental or singing lessons are cancelled by the tutor or the college, and payment has already been received, the college will transfer the funds to cover future lessons taken by the relevant student. If lessons are not being continued in the following term, the parent/carer may request a refund. Where a student fails to attend a pre-booked lesson, refunds do not apply.

Examination fees: Any charges that have been paid by parents/carers that are refunded by the examination board, will be refunded to parents/carers.

Activities outside college hours: When a student is absent due to illness and does not attend an educational/activity visit, the costs will not be refunded. However, the college will endeavour to

recover costs related to that activity and, if successful, will then refund the parent/carer. If a visit has to be cancelled by the college, parental contributions will be refunded, less any initial deposits withheld by the venue. Where contributions for an activity exceed the final total cost by more than £5 per pupil, a refund will be given. Excess income less than £5 per pupil will be retained in school funds. Excess expenditure will be paid from school funds.

Remissions Policy

The Principal will authorise the remission of charges in all cases.

The college will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the relevant support payments (in accordance with the current DfE listing) which make their child/children eligible for free school meals and for children in care.

All claims for remission of charges should be addressed to the Principal and will be dealt with confidentially.

The college may decide to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and students; each event or case will be considered individually by the Principal.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Governing Body will review this policy every three years.