



Policy Title: College Charging & Remissions Policy

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If you wish to discuss any aspect of this
policy the member of staff
you should see is:

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College Charging & Remissions Policy

This guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but is not a substitute for these terms.

Uckfield Community Technology College aims to provide a broad, balanced curriculum for all students within our care. However it is recognised that many educational valuable activities have been, and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or part, from parents/carers. Without that financial support, the College would find it impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of educational experiences provided for our students.

The purpose of this Charging and Remissions Policy is to ensure full and free access to a broad, balanced curriculum, and to ensure that no student is excluded from a curriculum essential trip or activity because of financial hardship. The Policy also identifies areas of activity where a charge may be made to parents/carers.

Curriculum

The College will not charge for:

- An admission application to any maintained College;
- Education provided during College hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided outside of College hours if it is part of the national curriculum¹ or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the College, or part of religious education;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the students parent;
- Entry for prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the College; and
- Examination resit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the College.²

The College reserves the right to charge in full, or part in respect of the following circumstances:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- optional extras (see next page);
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see following pages);

¹ It should be noted that 'part of the national curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the national curriculum 'inclusion statement' (e.g. developing teamwork skills).

² However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the student's parents.

Optional extras

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 College time that is not:
 - a) part of the national curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the College; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the College;
- transport (other than transport that is required to take the student to College or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the student to be provided with education);
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit;
- extended day services offered to students (for example breakfast club, after-College clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

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;
- Support 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 an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual students must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating.

It must not therefore 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. Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during College hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from College accompanying students 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 prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a College governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the College or any College activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the College cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Colleges must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Colleges should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on College visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Colleges should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

The cost outlined is a voluntary contribution. However, without the financial support of parents this trip or activity will not be able to go ahead. In the case of materials, the 1996 Education Act states that there is an exception in the legislation which enables schools to charge for materials where a pupil's parent wishes them to own the materials. In cases of financial hardship, particularly if your son/daughter is identified as Pupil Premium, please contact the Finance Office (finance.info@uctc.org.uk) to discuss.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during College hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a student who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Transport

Colleges cannot charge for:

- transporting registered students to or from the College premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered students to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the College; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Residential visits

Colleges cannot charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during College hours;³
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside College hours if it is part of the national curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the College, or part of religious education;
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from College accompanying students on a residential visit.

Colleges can charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a College informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;⁴
- 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 and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008

³ See section 452 of the Education Act 1996 for guidance as what counts as during College hours.

⁴ The government plans to prescribe the circumstances when Universal Credit is fully rolled out.

Education partly during College hours

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

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during College hours, it is deemed to take place during College hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during College hours. College 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 College hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside College hours. For example, an excursion might require students to leave College an hour before the College day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during College hours, it is deemed to take place during College hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during College hours. College 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 College hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside College hours. For example, an excursion might require students to leave College an hour before the College day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of College 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 College hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the College day, regulations require that the College 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

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

Example 2

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

Damage/Loss to Property

A charge may be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of College property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Head and/or Business Manager may decide.

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the College. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Head and/or Business Manager may decide.