

Castle School



Charging & Remissions

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Why do we have this policy?

Under certain circumstances the school is permitted to charge parents/carers for activities undertaken by their child(ren) or to ask for a voluntary contribution.

The Education Act 1996 requires that, before making such charges, the Governing Body must explain, in its charging policy, what services and activities it charges for and how the charges will be calculated.

Chargeable Activities and Services

Activities during school hours (except music)

The school recognises the huge benefit that a range of activities can have in enriching the curriculum and we are fortunate that our location enables us to take advantage of the wide range of museums, churches and outdoor spaces within and around Cambridge. We also place great importance on arranging for specialist professionals to visit the school to enrich the children's education.

Where activities take place wholly during the school day (9:00 am till 3:10pm) and are designed to meet or complement the curriculum the school may not charge for the activity, even where there is a cost to the school of providing that activity.

The school benefits from the support of the Castle School Charitable Association who contribute, wholly or in part, to the cost of some of these activities. However, in some cases the school will need to ask for a voluntary contribution from parents.

The amount of the contribution will usually be calculated by dividing the total cost of the activity by the number of children participating. Costs could include, but not be limited to:

- Transport to and from the venue
- Entry fees
- Costs of ingredients, materials and other resources
- Fees for specialist teachers and performers
- Cost of additional staff hours

The contributions requested will not exceed the total cost of the activity.

It is important to stress that the contribution is voluntary. No child will be excluded from an activity because their parent is unable or unwilling to pay.

However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received, the school reserves the right to cancel the activity.

Individual and small group music lessons during school hours

Music lessons which constitute part of the curriculum are, of course, delivered free of charge.

However, where the school provides the opportunity for children to have individual or small group instrumental or vocal tuition this is in addition to curriculum requirements and therefore is chargeable.

When lessons are offered, it will be made clear what charges will be made and whether they are payable directly to the tutor or to the school.

If the school provides instruments, CDs or books and you wish your child(ren) to own their instrument or copy, these too may be charged for on a case by case basis.

Optional activities outside school hours: before/after-school clubs and holiday clubs

Where the school operates regular activities outside school hours (e.g. after school club) these are optional and chargeable.

Fees are normally reviewed annually during the summer term for the following academic year.

Fees will be calculated based on the anticipated costs of running the club and the anticipated level of attendance. The fees charged will be designed to cover, but not exceed, the cost of:

- staff to run the club
- administration
- resources

In the event that the fees collected during a financial year (April to March) are less than the cost of running the club no additional charges will be made, but the governing body may consider increasing fees the following September or closing the club.

In the event that the fees collected during a financial year exceed the actual cost of running the club, the surplus will be retained by the school and re-invested in the club and school.

Occasionally activities are run on a voluntary basis by members of staff, in which case no charge is made for the activity, although a charge may be made for materials used.

Where after-school activities are operated by a third-party provider, the provider sets and collects the fees for the club.

Optional activities outside school hours: ad-hoc after-school activities

Occasionally the school will arrange for the children to participate in or attend events after school which are in addition to the curriculum and are optional. Where possible the school will endeavour to provide these activities free of charge. However, if necessary, the school may charge for participation. The charge will be calculated based on the anticipated total cost of the activity divided by the number of children expected to participate. The costs may include but not be limited to:

- entry fees
- transport to and from the venue
- cost of staff
- materials used

Residential Trips

Residential Trips are not part of the curriculum, can cost in excess of £200 per child and may need to be booked up to two years in advance to secure dates that fit into the rest of the academic year's programme. By virtue of the costs and timescales involved, residential trips are a special case.

The school may charge for board and lodgings but can only ask for a voluntary contribution to all other costs associated with the trip including transport, activities, materials, and staff time.

The school endeavours not to exclude any child from a residential trip but reserves the right to refuse to take a child if the board and lodgings charge has not been paid. Parents who wish their child to attend a residential trip and have genuine difficulty paying the board & lodgings charge are urged to discuss the matter in confidence with the Head Teacher or the School Business Manager at the earliest opportunity.

Parents will not be charged for board and lodgings if their child is eligible for Pupil Premium funding or has been awarded a 16-19 Bursary grant. However, the parents may still be asked if they wish to make a voluntary contribution.

No child will be excluded from a trip simply because their parents are unable or unwilling to make the voluntary contribution.

If parent contributions are insufficient to cover the cost of the residential visit, the school reserves the right to cancel the visit.

If a visit is cancelled, for whatever reason, the school will endeavour to refund any contributions made. However, if the school has already made non-refundable payments on behalf of parents or if the school has already become liable for 100% of the cost of the visit, the school reserves the right not to refund monies that it cannot recover.

Where a child is withdrawn from a trip at short notice (for example if they move to another school), the school will endeavour to refund the cost of the visit. However, if the school has already made non-refundable payments to the venue or the coach provider on the behalf of the parents/carer or if the school is already liable for 100% of the cost of the visit, the school reserves the right not to refund these monies unless the child's place can be taken by another child.

Reports and Letters

During the summer term, all children receive an annual report on their progress, for which no charge is made, and if children transfer to another school their files will be sent to their new school.

However, the school reserves the right to charge if you request additional reports, letters or completion of forms, such as an application for a passport, which do not relate directly to their education at Castle School. This is to cover the cost of staff time to prepare such documents.

This is a fixed charge for each report or letter sent, regardless of the length of time it takes for staff to prepare the document. The charge is fixed for the academic year and is reviewed annually during the summer term. For details of current charges, please refer to the schedule of charges.

Uniform & Equipment

School uniform is sold directly by the manufacturer and prices are set by the manufacturer, not the school. Materials and equipment sold by the school, rather than directly by the manufacturer, will be sold to parents at cost.

School Dinners

The charge for school dinners is fixed for the academic year. For details of current charges, please refer to the schedule of charges.

School dinner money must be paid in advance.

Breakages and Damages

The school reserves the right to require parents/carers to pay for the cost of wilful damage caused by the pupil's behaviour (e.g. breaking a window, damage to furniture, doors etc.) This also applies to lost, damaged or defaced school books.

Minibuses

Only the school's pupils, staff or parents/carers may travel for a charge in a school minibus. Schools may charge for transport in their minibuses only if they hold a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. A permit will not be required if no charge is made in cash or kind. Charges made for travel in the school minibuses will cover only actual costs, including depreciation. The service will not make a profit for the school.

Notification of Charges

Charges which are fixed for the academic year will be included in the annual schedule of charges, which will be displayed in the school office.

Charges and voluntary contributions for events, activities and trips organised during the course of the year will be communicated in advance.

Remissions

As previously stated, students who are eligible are exempt from paying board and lodgings on residential trips.

In some cases, the governing body may choose to reduce or waive other charges for eligible students to enable them to participate in a range of activities.

If you are in receipt of one of the following benefits and the cost of an activity is preventing your child from taking part in it, you are encouraged to discuss the matter, in confidence, with the Head Teacher or one of the office staff:

- 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,
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit,
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).

Pupil Premium

Students from Reception to Year 11 are eligible for Pupil Premium Support if:

- they are recorded as eligible for free school meals, or have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years,
- their family has no recourse to public funds (NRPF),
- they are currently looked after by a local authority care,
- children previously looked after by a local authority or other state care, but who have left care through adoption or a special guardianship order.

If you think your child(ren) may be eligible, please speak to the school office about making an application.

16-19 Discretionary Bursary

Eligible students in Years 12, 13 and 14 can apply for a 16-19 Discretionary Bursary.

The Discretionary Bursary fund is held by the school and students may apply for a grant from this fund by completing the form in Appendix B. To be eligible a student must fulfil one of three criteria:

- be entitled to receive a Free School Meal,
- live in a household with a household income below £20,817 per annum,
- be able to provide evidence of additional challenging circumstance.

The application form can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the school office. Completed applications should be returned to the school office marked for the attention of the School Business Manager.

Students may submit an application at any point during the academic year as their financial/home situation dictates but awards will not be backdated. Applications will be subject to a review of their performance during the current academic year. Students in receipt of bursary funding (or their parents/carers) are required to make the school aware of any change in financial/home situation as they arise.

Discretionary Bursary grants will normally be paid 'In Kind', which means that students will receive the practical benefit of the Bursary rather than a cash payment. Please note that this is a small fund,

typically £1200 per annum, and if over-subscribed priority will be given to those students with the lowest household income and/or with the highest demonstrated need.

All students have the right to appeal a Discretionary Bursary decision and must submit a letter to the Head Teacher, via the school office, within two-weeks of receiving their decision letter. All decisions regarding appeals will be communicated within a week of the Head Teacher assessing the appeal. The Head Teacher's decision is final. However, this should not stop a student submitting a further application should they feel they have sufficient change in circumstances.

Vulnerable Learner Bursary

Vulnerable Learner Bursaries are granted by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The school is responsible for administering applications on behalf of students.

Students may be able to get a bursary if at least one of the following applies:

- the student is in or recently left local authority care,
- the student gets Income Support or Universal Credit and financially supports themselves,
- the student gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their own name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit,
- the student gets Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own name and either ESA or Universal Credit.

The amount of any grant depends on the costs the student faces for their course and might include money for books, equipment or travel costs to school or college.

If you think you or your young person may be eligible for a Vulnerable Learner Bursary, please speak to your class teacher or the school office.

Payment of charges and voluntary contributions

All charges are payable in advance.

The school accepts payment by cheque, cash and online payment for all charges and voluntary contributions. Parents are encouraged to pay online to reduce the risk of fraud and theft and to reduce the cost of the school of administering parent payments. To access your child(ren)'s online account please contact the Finance Officer by emailing accounts@castle.cambs.sch.uk.

Cheques should be made payable to Castle School. Cash and cheques should be put in a sealed envelope with your child(ren)'s name, the amount enclosed and what it's for written on the front.

For reasons of cash security, please do not hand cash or cheques to classroom staff and do not leave loose cash or cheques in Reception. Always hand them directly to a member of the office team.

The school will not pursue parents for the non-payment of voluntary contributions.

Non-payment of charges will be pursued. Children's accounts will be monitored weekly. Emails will be sent to parents/carers advising them of any arrears.

Failure to respond to such communication and to settle the arrears may result in your child not being allowed to take school dinners or participate in chargeable activities.

Materials and equipment will not be issued until payment has been received.

If you are having difficulty in paying arrears you are strongly encouraged to discuss the matter, in confidence, with the Head Teacher or one of the office staff.

Divorced and Separated Parents

Financial arrangements between divorced and separated parents are a private matter for the individuals concerned. To avoid unnecessary intrusion by the school into these private matters, all correspondence regarding permissions and charges will be addressed to the parent/carer residing at the child's registered address as recorded in the school's Management Information System. It will be the responsibility of that parent/carer to pay any charges to the school and, if they wish to do so, to seek a contribution from the other parent towards those charges. This applies to all chargeable activities, including school meals.

Should parents wish the school to deviate from this policy, for example if parents have been awarded joint custody, the parents should jointly make a written request to the Head Teacher proposing how they would like any charges to be split between them.

Monitoring and Review

The Resources committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body during the summer term.

Appendix A: Schedule of Charges

Charges for the Academic Year 2023/24

School meal: £2.65

School meal taken at Chesterton: £3.00

Adult school meal: £3.70

Completions of forms and letters: £25

Appendix B: 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Application

16 to 19 Bursary Fund, Application Form Castle School

Please complete each section listed below

Section 1. Details of applicant

Section 2. Eligibility

Section 3. How the funds will be used

Section 4. Declaration by applicant

Section 5. (To be completed by your Post 16 Provider)

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM USING BLOCK CAPITALS

Section 1: Details of applicant:

Male ☐ Female ☐

Full Name:

Date of Birth:

Home Address:

Postcode:

Tel:.....

Email:.....

Section 2: Eligibility

Please place a cross in the box to indicate that you wish to apply for 16 to 19 bursary funding, and to confirm that you have provided the evidence required.

Category 1: Vulnerable Learner

☐

I wish my application to be considered under category one, Vulnerable Learner as I am a young person in local authority care, or have recently left local authority care; or I am in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit, in my own name; or I am disabled and receive both Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Disability Living Allowance, or Personal Independence Payments in my own name.

In support of my application I enclose either:

A) Written confirmation of my current, or previous, looked-after status from the Local Authority who looked after me, or who provided my leaving care services; or

B) A letter confirming my benefit entitlement to the benefits listed above.

Category 2: Discretionary Bursary

☐

I wish my application to be considered under category two, Discretionary Bursary. Please also select which sub-section you wish to be considered against.

Category 2a: - Free School Meals

☐

You may apply under this category if you are a “Young person who is claiming, or who is eligible to receive, a Free School Meal”

In support of my application I authorise Castle School to check the accuracy of your entitlement to a Free School Meal with the Education Welfare Benefits Team, who administer Free School Meals, to verify this entitlement through their records.

Category 2b: - Low Income

☐

You may apply under this category if you are a “Young person whose household income is below £20,817 per annum”

In support of my application I enclose the following information:

- i. A copy of entitlement to means tested state benefit, or Tax Credit Award Notice confirming household income of less than £20,817; or
- ii. Evidence of self-employment income of less than £20,817 (SA302 or certified accounts only) for your last accounting period.

Category 2c: - Additional challenging circumstance

☐

To qualify for a bursary under this category please provide a statement to support your application.

Section 3: How the funds will be used:

Please provide below details of how the bursary funds, if awarded to you, will be used, and the amount

Category	Amount £
Books / equipment / specialist clothing related to the course you are following.	
Additional course costs, for example, educational trips / visits.	
Transport	
Meals	
Other items solely related to the course you are following, please provide details.	

How you will receive your Bursary Award

Discretionary Bursaries will normally be paid 'In Kind', which means that you will receive the practical benefit of the Bursary rather than a 'Cash' payment. Any 'Cash' payments may need to be paid direct into your bank account on a half termly basis.

In order for us to pay the bursary into bank accounts (if required) please provide the students bank details

Please note we are unable to make payments into post office accounts

Account Holders Name: _____

Bank/Building Society: _____

8 Digit Account number:

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Roll Number if applicable: _____

Sort Code:

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Section 4: Declaration by Applicant:

I confirm that I have read the Cambridgeshire 16 to 19 Bursary Policy and Procedure document before submitting this application.

I confirm that the information I have provided on this application is correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I understand that I must notify Castle School of any change of circumstance which may affect my entitlement to a bursary payment.

I understand that if I leave before the completion of my programme of study, that I may be required to repay all or part of the amount paid to me under the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

I will notify the Welfare Benefits Service of any changes to my financial circumstances that may affect my entitlement to the Bursary Fund.

I understand that my information is being held by Castle School in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be shared with other bodies administering public funds to determine the support available and also for the prevention and detection of fraud in connection with this claim. Bank details are needed in order to make Bursary fund payments these are stored in a secure lockable place and will be held for 4 years and then removed and securely disposed of.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Section 5: Completed by Castle School

I confirm that this applicant meets the residency and eligibility criteria under which a bursary may be paid. I confirm that this applicant is enrolled on a programme of study under which a bursary may be awarded.

I confirm that the expenditure detailed in Section 4 is relevant and appropriate for the programme of study being followed by this applicant.

Signed; _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____