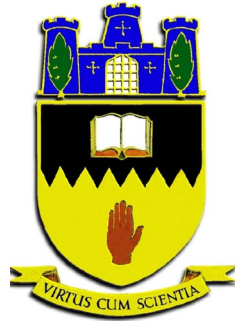


Cookstown High School



Charging and Remissions Policy

Reviewed: February 2023

Next Review: February 2026

Policy Overview

Policy Title:	Charges and remissions Policy
Target Audience:	Governors, Staff, Parents
Policy Lead:	Principal
Policy Developed by:	EA and SLT
Those Consulted:	Education Authority
Ratified by Board of Governors on:	February 2023
Implementation Date:	February 2026
Review Date:	
Principal:	Miss G Evans
Chair of Board of Governors:	Mrs L Dripps

This procedure has been reviewed to include reference to the remit of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) in investigating complaints from members of the public in relation to maladministration in publicly funded schools.

RECORD OF POLICY REVIEWS & AMENDMENTS

The following table outlines any significant changes/amendments made to this procedure since it was ratified by the Board of Governors on:

DATE OF REVIEW OR AMENDMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGES / AMENDMENTS TO PROCEDURE	APPROVED BY

Policy Statement

Cookstown High School believes that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular). This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may otherwise prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Admissions

There is no charge for admission to Cookstown High School or any associated service related to admission provided by the school.

Voluntary contributions to School Support Fund

Cookstown High School will ask for voluntary contributions to the School Support Fund (SSF) (payable to the PTFA) for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid and recoverable by the school will be returned to parents.

There may be occasions when nonpayers of the School Support Fund incur a higher charge for an event which is subsidised by the SSF.

Activities that take place during school hours

There is no charge for normal lesson activities during school hours, including essential lesson materials and protective equipment or clothing required to access part of the statutory curriculum. Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend on contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no student will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

Additional textbooks and study materials

Recommendations may be made regarding additional textbooks, equipment and study materials which could enhance a pupil's learning but not deemed essential to the curriculum, such as revision guides or examination materials. In these circumstances it is the parent's choice to purchase and therefore the charge will be met in full by the parent. Any such charge will be equal to the cost price of the item concerned to the school.

School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount as determined by the Schools Meals Service of the Education Authority.

Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the pupil's subject selection on the school's set examinations list and where pupils have been prepared for the examinations by the school.

However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement or to attend for an examination, the school reserves the right to recover the fee incurred from that pupil's parents.

Resits which are not necessitated by the actions of the school must be paid for by pupils, parents or guardians BEFORE entry will be made. Late entries which are not the fault of the school must be paid for by pupils, parents or guardians BEFORE entry will be made.

Day trips /Visits

For day trips, which are not a statutory part of the curriculum, parents may be asked for a contribution towards the trip. If insufficient funding is received from contributions the trip may be cancelled.

Essential course fieldwork

No charge will be made in respect of transport or the provision of equipment for fieldwork where this is an integral part of the course, when this is associated with education mainly during school hours. Suitable clothing does need to be worn and taken on daily field trips.

Travel / transportation

Travel charges may apply for optional activities and the amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil. These charges may not apply to those pupils entitled to remissions, but no other pupils will be charged extra to cover those costs. Where a student is selected for a team for extra-curricular matches/events a contribution towards transportation costs will be expected if no contribution has been made towards the School Support Fund.

Music tuition

Cookstown High School facilitates music tuition which may be provided by the EA Music Service or a Private Tutor. The EA Music Service sets the charge for tuition and charges the school at the start of the year for the entire cost of music tuition. This charge is passed on to parents and may be paid in three termly instalments. The school does not make a profit from music tuition. It is understood that in signing up for music tuition parents/ guardians commit to pay the full cost whether or not the pupil avails themselves of all lessons. The school reserves the right to recover charges not paid by parents or guardians.

Practical subjects

In practical subjects a number of items will be made, either to take home or consumed on the premises. Therefore certain departments may request a contribution towards materials and equipment used. Where parents have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, a charge will be made. The charge shall not exceed the cost of materials used by the student.

Enhancement workshops

The school reserves the right to ask for a contribution towards various workshops that may be organised to benefit students both academically and pastorally.

The cost of optional activities

The Principal will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be determined by the Principal on the approval of the finance sub-committee of the Board of Governors.

When calculating the cost of optional activities an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the activity;
- Non-Teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra;
- 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.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Residential activities, educational visits and school trips

Board and lodging

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place.

We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed what is reasonable.

Activities

The school may charge for residential activities that are not required as part of the set curriculum.

School Trips and Educational visits

Each year Cookstown High School offers several such trips e.g. ski trip, sports tours, the Modern Languages Trip, or curriculum *related* trips and visits. When a trip or educational visit is optional and parents have requested their child's participation, the full cost of the trip will be charged to all the participants. Failure to pay, or unwillingness to pay on the part of a parent/ guardian, will result in the withdrawal of the pupil from the trip.

For such trips parents/ guardians will be advised of cancellation penalties at the time of booking.

A non-refundable deposit might be required, of which parents/ guardians will be advised in advance.

The cost of these trips will include a cost for the provision of substitute teachers.

Extra and Co-curricular activities

The High School is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our pupils which includes a wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. These activities enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day;
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services);
- ways of increasing pupil engagement;

- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

Loss or damage to school property

Parents/carers may be asked to make a contribution towards replacing damaged school property caused wilfully or negligently by their child/ren. This may include window breakage and removal of graffiti. A charge to cover the cost of replacement may also be made for lost or damaged items of school property, including library books/textbooks. Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Principal and dependent on the situation.

Remissions and concessions

The school will give consideration to the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals (FSME). Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The Principal and Chairman of the Board of Governors will authorise the remission of charges.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the governing body and Principal.

Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Principal and updated as necessary.

Linked documents:

- Gifted and Talented Policy
- School Trips Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy