

Charging and Remissions Policy

BFA Vision and Objectives

Bristol Futures Academy (BFA) is a 14-16 academy offering a specialist delivery model for Young people who find mainstream provision challenging for a number of reasons. BFA provides a personalised, flexible and innovative programmes of study, centred on the needs of the individual, enabling them to overcome their barriers to learning, equipping them with the skills for future success and enabling their re-integration into full-time mainstream provision or meaningful onward progression. BFA delivers this provision in partnership with Weston Academy and Bristol City Council, parents, existing schools and other alternative providers and local employers in order to:

- Provide an inspiring and engaging curriculum which motivates students to exceed beyond their expectations
- Offer academic, vocational and technical learning enabling each student to learn and achieve in a style best suited to them
- To be an inclusive centre of excellence.
- To enable each student to aspire to an achieve meaningful and productive futures, in terms of careers, personal independence and the ability to make a positive contribution to society

The person with responsibility for this policy is the Principal

Date policy approved: xxxxxxxxxx

Policy will be to be reviewed by the Governors every two years however it will be reviewed initially after the Academy opens, during October 2016.

Date of next policy review: September 2018

Policy statement

It is the policy of BFA that:

- No charges are made for admitting students to BFA and that education provided during school hours shall be free.
- Reasonable charges will be made for activities wholly or mainly outside school hours.
- All cases of hardship relating to attendance at a BFA originated activity will be dealt with sensitively and swiftly within the limits of BFA's budget.
- All wilful loss of or damage to BFA's property shall be paid for or BFA reimbursed by the person responsible for the loss or damage.
- The use of BFA's buildings and equipment by the local community or organisations should be encouraged. Reasonable charges for the hire of these premises shall be made.
- Where appropriate, BFA seeks voluntary contributions for the benefit and support of school activities.

Specific guidance

Charges to replace/repair damage or loss of BFA property shall be the cost to BFA of the replacement or repair. The Governing Body authorise the Principal to take all reasonable steps to recover a loss to BFA.

Where an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this must be declared to parents/carers at the outset and that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it financially.

Charging and remission procedure

- 1) Prohibition of charges
- 2) Voluntary contributions
- 3) Activities (during school hours) not arranged by the school
- 4) Education outside school hours
- 5) Residential activities
- 6) Exemptions from charging for residential activities
- 7) General charges for educational activities
- 8) Hire and rental charges
- 9) Charges for loss or damage
- 10) Principal's waiver.

1 Prohibition of charges

The Governing Body of BFA recognises that legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided outside school 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 BFA, or part of religious education;
- Entry for a prescribed examination, if the student has been prepared for it at BFA;
- Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at BFA;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school 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 BFA, or part of religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from BFA accompanying students on a residential trip;
- Transporting registered students to or from BFA, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the governing body or the local education authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when she/he has been prepared for that examination at BFA;
- Transport provided in connection with an education trip.

2 Voluntary contributions

BFA shall seek voluntary contributions from parents/carers for the benefit of BFA or in support of any BFA activities whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential.

The terms of any request made to parents will specify that the request for voluntary contribution in no way represents a charge. In addition, the following will be made clear to parents/carers:-

- a) That the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent is under no obligation to pay
- b) That the registered student at BFA will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents/carers have made any contribution in response to the request
- c) If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contribution, the Principal or his/her representative must make this clear to parents/carers at the outset
- d) The use to which the voluntary contributions will be put

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Principal. A part or all of the cost of an approved activity may be met from BFA funds or a fund raising activity.

As a guide, the initial letter to parents/carers for which voluntary contributions are requested shall include the following:-

1. The nature of the proposed activity.
2. The value of the activity in educational terms.
3. The contribution per student which would be required if the activity were to take place.
4. A statement that the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent/carer is under no obligation to pay.
5. A reassurance that no registered student shall be treated differently whether a voluntary contribution has been made.
6. The use to which a voluntary contribution will be put (travel costs, residential costs etc.).
7. How any surplus will be managed (repayment, put into college funds etc.).
8. A clear statement that the activity will not go ahead without sufficient voluntary contributions if this is the case.
9. A contact name/telephone number for discrete advice regarding support in case of hardship.
10. A statement that anyone in receipt of support payments (e.g. Income Support) is entitled to claim remission.

3 Activities (during school hours) not arranged BFA

When an organisation operating totally independently of BFA or LA arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents/carers want their children to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents/carers. BFA accepts no responsibility or liability for these activities. Risk Assessments and Safety Checks are not made by BFA and BFA will not recommend or approve such organisations or activities.

However, where an activity is organised by a third party, and is approved by BFA, is educational or is supervised by someone authorised by BFA, it will be treated as if it were provided by BFA and will follow the BFA's procedures for an approved educational activity. A request for Voluntary Contributions can thus be made

4 Education outside school hours

Education outside school hours is defined in legislation as an "optional extra". Participation in any optional extra will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made. The agreement of parents/carers is a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra for which a charge is made. BFA's delegated budget cannot be used to subsidise extra-curricular activity.

A charge:

- May not exceed the actual cost of provision
- May not include an element of subsidy
- If the activity takes place with a small proportion of school time, the cost of providing cover for students not attending may not be included
- May be met by fund raising.

The costs may include:

- Student travel costs
- Students' board and lodging
- Materials and equipment
- Non-teaching staff costs
- Entrance fees
- Insurance costs

- An amount to cover the cost of engaging staff specifically for the purpose of providing the activity and their travel and board and lodging. (Staff already employed by BFA may not have their costs included unless they are engaged on a separate contract to provide the optional extra).

5 Residential activities

A residential activity involves nights away from school/home.

The test to determine whether the activity is within or outside school hours (and therefore the legitimacy of charging students) is based on the number of half days taken up by the activity (including travel) relative to the number of days the student would have attended had the activity not taken place. A residential activity is deemed to have taken place within school time if the number of half day sessions missed by the student amounts to half or more of the number of half days taken up by the activity.

Example 1

A trip from noon Wednesday to 9am Sunday would last for 9 half days, i.e. 5 half days of school sessions and 4 half days of non-school sessions. This activity takes place in school time and any charges must reflect this. Charges may not be made for educational provision or travel. A charge can be made for board and lodging. Voluntary contributions may be requested.

Example 2

A trip from noon Thursday to 9pm Sunday would last for 7 half days, ie.3 half days of school sessions and 4 half days of non-school sessions. This activity takes outside school time and charges may reflect this.

6 Exemptions from charging

Children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to free school lunch entitlement also be eligible for the remission of charges for board and lodgings during residential college trips:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Support under part 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, where a parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and whose annual income does not exceed £15,575.
- Guaranteed State Pension Credit.

Note

The trigger for entitlement to remission of charges for the residential trip is free school lunch eligibility.

7 Charges for educational activity

This section summarises details from the six sections above.

With the exception of those activities prohibited by legislation and within the procedures described above, BFA has determined to charge as follows:-

- a) Board and lodgings on residential visits (not to exceed costs) (Section 5).
- b) The proportionate cost for an individual student of activities known as “optional extras” to meet the costs for: travel; materials and equipment, non-teaching costs; entrance fees; insurance costs; costs of engaging staff to deliver the activity and their board and lodging. (Section 4).
- c) Re-sits for public examinations where no preparation has been provided by BFA.
- d) Costs of non-prescribed examinations where no further preparation has been provided by BFA.

- e) Any other education, transport or examination fee unless charges are specifically prohibited.
- f) Breakages, loss and replacements as a result of damage caused wilfully or negligently by students. (Section 9)

Parents/carers will also be expected to pay for:-

- Costs of ingredients and materials provided by BFA where parents/carers have indicated in advance they wish to own or retain the finished product.
- Transport from home to an activity provided or sanctioned by BFA or LA for example a work placement.
- The cost of an examination fee where, without good cause, the student has failed to complete the examination required.
- The costs of any individual re-marking or re-assessment where the parent/carer has queried the marking or grading.

8 Hire and rental charges

It is the policy of BFA that its resources (buildings, sports facilities etc.) should be used to the maximum benefit of the community it serves. The school will therefore make its facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined annually by the Finance Committee. For users connected to BFA the charge will be based on staff overtime costs.

9 Charges for loss and damages

In any organisation, some accidental loss or damage to resources and fair wear and tear are accepted as a fact of life and BFA's budget makes due allowance for this.

However, deliberate, wilful or negligent loss of or damage to the School's resources not only puts an unfair strain on the budget but denies or compromises the opportunity and right to learn.

For these reasons, it is the policy of BFA that those causing wilful loss or damage shall make good the loss or damage appropriately.

- 1) Loss of /irreparable damage to books, IT equipment, PE equipment, DT tools etc.; BFA shall claim the "market rate" for repair or replacement.
- 2) Damage to the structure of the buildings, furniture etc.; BFA shall claim the cost of the repair (e.g. broken window, chair, etc.) or an appropriate replacement.
- 3) Where damage has been sustained to the fabric of the School or equipment due to the criminal behaviour of others, BFA shall actively co-operate with the police authorities with a view to seeking restitution.
- 4) The Principal and/or her representative will consider in all cases where the costs of replacement have not been met by the perpetrators of the wilful loss or damage or criminal behaviour, action via a Civil Prosecution or the Small Claims Court.
- 5) BFA should always try to recover debts owed to preserve its budget (for spending on improvements for learning) rather than replacement of wilfully lost or damaged items. The Principal is thus authorised to pursue bad debts, including the use of outside specialist debt collection agencies, as long as the effect on BFA's budget is at least cost neutral.

10 Principal's waiver /discretion

Specifically in relation to this Charging and Remissions Policy, the Principal has the right to use his/her discretion and waive or reduce charges, costs or hiring charges as in the examples below. (These examples are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.)

It is anticipated by the Governors that the Principal will use this right to waive or reduce in exceptional circumstances only. Action taken by the Principal to waive or reduce shall be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at the meeting following the action taken.

The Principal's actions shall be constrained by the BFA's budget and no action to waive costs may be made that would prejudice the budget no matter what the circumstances or how deserving the cause.

Waiving costs for a student whose family had suddenly fallen on hard times and who are not covered by Section 6 Exemptions.

Waiving rental/hire charges to a local organisation as the school's "charitable" contribution to an event.