



Riverside Virtual College - Charging and Remissions Policy

Legislation	Education/ Other
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Publication Date	July 2024
Review Frequency	Annually
Date of Last Review	September 26
Date of next review	September 27

1. Policy Statement

Riverside Virtual College (RVC) is an independent specialist virtual school providing personalised education for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Placements may be commissioned by local authorities, schools or other organisations and, where agreed by RVC, may also be privately funded.

As an independent school, RVC operates on a fee-charging basis. This policy explains how fees and additional charges are determined, what is normally included within a commissioned placement, the circumstances in which additional charges may arise and how RVC will consider requests for remission or variation.

RVC is committed to ensuring that charging arrangements are clear, fair and transparent. Where a pupil's placement is commissioned and funded by a local authority or another commissioning body, parents and carers will not ordinarily be asked to pay separately for educational provision that forms part of the agreed commissioned placement.

2. Legal and Regulatory Context

RVC is a registered independent school and its charging arrangements therefore differ from those applying to maintained schools and academies.

This policy has regard, where relevant, to the Education Act 1996, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, the Equality Act 2010, applicable data-protection legislation and relevant contractual and commissioning arrangements.

RVC will also have regard to the terms of a pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), where applicable, and to the responsibilities of the local authority or other body commissioning the placement.

The Department for Education's guidance on charging for school activities is principally directed at maintained schools and academies and does not provide the legal basis for RVC's core placement fees as an independent school.

3. Placement Fees

RVC charges fees for educational placements. The fee for an individual placement will be confirmed as part of the consultation, commissioning and contractual process before the placement begins.

Pre 16 placement: £35,000 per academic year, exclusive of VAT where VAT is applicable.

Post 16 placement: £25,000 per academic year, exclusive of VAT where VAT is applicable.

The actual fee offered may vary where the pupil requires a different level or type of provision.

Part-time, short-term, assessment, reintegration or bespoke placements may be priced individually according to the agreed timetable, curriculum, staffing and level of specialist support.

The written placement offer or commissioning agreement will identify the fee applicable to the individual pupil and, where necessary, the provision included within that fee.

4. What the Placement Fee Covers

Unless otherwise specified in the individual placement agreement, the placement fee is intended to cover the educational provision commissioned from RVC.

This will normally include access to the agreed virtual curriculum, teaching and tutorial provision, ordinary curriculum planning and assessment, pastoral support provided as part of RVC's core offer, access to RVC's approved virtual learning systems and the reasonable resources necessary to deliver the agreed programme.

Where SEND support, specialist intervention or therapeutic input has specifically been included within the commissioned package, the cost and nature of that provision should be reflected in the placement offer or commissioning agreement.

RVC will not introduce an additional charge for provision that it has already expressly agreed to provide within the commissioned fee unless a subsequent variation has been agreed with the commissioner.

5. Bespoke and Additional Provision

There may be circumstances in which a local authority, school, other commissioner or privately funding parent requests provision beyond that contained within the original placement agreement.

This might include additional one-to-one teaching, additional subjects, specialist assessments, therapeutic or professional input, enhanced staffing, additional examination arrangements, specialist resources or another substantial variation to the pupil's agreed programme.

Where an additional charge is proposed, RVC will explain the additional provision and associated cost before it is introduced. Where a placement is externally commissioned, agreement will normally be sought from the commissioner before additional chargeable provision begins.

A pupil will not be disadvantaged because a parent or carer personally declines to fund an additional service where responsibility for securing that provision properly rests with the commissioning body or another statutory agency.

6. SEND and Education, Health and Care Plans

Where a pupil has an EHCP, RVC will have regard to the provision specified within the plan, the terms of the commissioning agreement and the arrangements under which the placement has been commissioned.

Where educational provision specified in an EHCP forms part of the agreed RVC placement, RVC will not normally seek separate payment from the pupil's family for that provision.

If a pupil's needs change significantly and RVC considers that additional provision or resources are necessary, the College will normally raise this with the local authority or

relevant commissioner. Where appropriate, RVC may request a review of the EHCP or placement arrangements.

Personal budgets and direct payments connected with an EHCP will be managed in accordance with the applicable statutory arrangements and the agreement of the relevant local authority.

7. Virtual Learning Equipment

RVC may provide pupils with laptops, peripherals, software, learning materials or other equipment to enable them to access their virtual education.

Unless expressly stated otherwise, equipment supplied on loan remains the property of RVC and must be used in accordance with the College's Acceptable Use arrangements and any equipment loan agreement.

Parents/carers and pupils are expected to take reasonable care of loaned equipment and to report loss, damage, malfunction or security concerns promptly.

RVC will distinguish between reasonable wear and tear or accidental damage and deliberate, reckless or repeated misuse. Charges for replacement or repair will not be imposed automatically. The circumstances of the incident, the pupil's SEND or disability, the terms of the equipment agreement and any relevant commissioning arrangements will be considered before a charge is made.

Where a charge is considered appropriate, RVC will provide details of the reason for the charge and the amount sought.

8. Curriculum Resources

Resources that RVC considers necessary for delivery of the agreed commissioned virtual curriculum will normally be included within the placement arrangements unless the commissioning agreement provides otherwise.

An additional charge may be made for items requested for a pupil's personal ownership, duplicate or replacement resources, specialist materials outside the agreed programme, or optional resources requested by a parent, carer or commissioner.

Any proposed charge will be made clear before the item is ordered wherever practicable.

9. Enrichment, Visits and Additional Activities

Although RVC operates primarily as a virtual school, pupils may be offered opportunities to participate in face-to-face educational visits, enrichment activities, careers experiences, workshops, cultural activities or other additional opportunities.

The funding arrangements for these activities will be made clear in advance. Depending upon the nature of the activity and the commissioning agreement, the cost may be met by RVC, the commissioning body or through an agreed additional charge.

Where RVC seeks a voluntary contribution towards an activity, the voluntary nature of the contribution will be made clear.

RVC will consider accessibility, safeguarding, SEND, reasonable adjustments and equality of opportunity when arranging enrichment or face-to-face activities.

10. Voluntary Contributions

RVC may occasionally invite voluntary contributions towards enrichment or additional opportunities.

Any request will make clear that the contribution is voluntary. A pupil will not be treated less favourably because their parent or carer has not made a voluntary contribution.

Where an activity cannot proceed without sufficient funding, RVC may explain this when requesting contributions.

11. Privately Funded Placements

Where RVC agrees to accept a privately funded placement, the fees and payment arrangements will be confirmed in writing before the placement begins.

The agreement should identify the services included within the fee, payment arrangements, notice requirements and any circumstances in which additional charges may arise.

RVC recognises that family circumstances can change. Where a privately funded family experiences exceptional financial hardship, the College may consider a request for temporary variation, payment arrangements or remission. Any such arrangement is discretionary and will be considered individually.

12. Remissions and Financial Hardship

RVC may wholly or partly waive an additional charge where it considers this reasonable and appropriate.

In making that decision, the College may consider the pupil's circumstances, the purpose of the charge, whether the provision is necessary for the pupil to access their agreed education, SEND or disability, exceptional financial hardship and whether another organisation has responsibility for funding the provision.

Looked-after or previously looked-after status will be considered where relevant, but remission will not be based automatically on status alone. The funding responsibilities and individual circumstances of the placement will be considered.

Requests for remission should normally be made to the Headteacher or another member of staff authorised to consider financial arrangements. Requests will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

13. Equality and Reasonable Adjustments

RVC will not impose charges in a way that unlawfully discriminates against a pupil because of disability or another protected characteristic.

Where a reasonable adjustment is required to enable a disabled pupil to access the education or service being provided, RVC will consider its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the relevant commissioning arrangements before seeking any additional payment from the family.

14. VAT and Tax Treatment

RVC will apply VAT to fees and other taxable supplies where required by current legislation and HMRC guidance.

Since 1 January 2025, education services provided by private schools for a charge are generally subject to VAT at the standard rate of 20%, subject to the applicable legislation and any relevant exemptions or special rules.

Where VAT is applicable, invoices and fee information will clearly identify the VAT element and the total amount payable.

The VAT treatment of education, therapeutic provision, examination services, additional activities, resources and other supplies will be determined according to the nature of the provision and the legislation applicable at the time the service is supplied.

RVC will keep its VAT arrangements under review and will update its charging arrangements where there are changes to relevant legislation or HMRC guidance.

15. Invoicing and Payment

Fees will be invoiced in accordance with the relevant commissioning agreement, contract or privately funded placement agreement.

Invoices should clearly identify the pupil or service concerned, the relevant period of provision, any applicable VAT and the total amount payable.

Queries about an invoice should be raised promptly with RVC so that they can be investigated and resolved.

Where a local authority, school or other body has commissioned the placement, disputes about payment will normally be addressed between RVC and that commissioning body rather than involving the pupil.

16. Safeguarding and Continuity of Education

Financial or contractual disputes must be managed in a way that takes account of the welfare and educational needs of the pupil.

Where funding for a commissioned placement is disputed, changed or withdrawn, RVC will communicate with the commissioner and, where appropriate, the parent/carer and relevant professionals.

Safeguarding concerns must be referred through RVC's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures irrespective of any financial dispute.

Where a pupil has an EHCP or other statutory involvement, RVC will consider whether liaison with the local authority or an appropriate review is required before changes are made to the pupil's educational arrangements.

17. Complaints and Disputes

Questions about charges should initially be raised with RVC so that the basis of the charge can be explained and reviewed.

Where a parent/carer remains dissatisfied with a matter falling within RVC's responsibility, they may use the College's Complaints Procedure.

Where the matter concerns funding or provision for a local-authority-commissioned placement, an EHCP or another statutory decision, the appropriate local authority or statutory review and appeal arrangements may also apply.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the implementation of this policy and ensure that charges are applied consistently with RVC's contractual, educational, SEND and equality responsibilities.

Improvement Partners will review the policy annually. The policy may be reviewed sooner following changes to legislation, taxation, SEND funding arrangements, independent-school regulation, commissioning arrangements or RVC's virtual provision.

19. Riverside Values

RVC's approach to fees, charging and remissions reflects the College's values of **Honesty, Integrity and Respect**.

Charges will be communicated transparently, financial decisions will be made consistently, and individual circumstances will be considered fairly and sensitively.