



Financial Support Policy

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Introduction & Aims

We believe that all our students should have an opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) regardless of their socio-economic background.

This policy sets out a framework to secure a consistent, fair and inclusive approach to the provision of financial support to students, thereby reducing the financial barriers which may prevent some students from taking full advantage of wider school opportunities such as trips, workshops, after school clubs, uniform and equipment.

The key aims of this policy are to:

- Secure consistent application of grants such as Pupil Premium to support students in accessing wider school opportunities.
- Secure consistent mechanisms, whilst enabling flexibility, to support students experiencing hardship outside of the strict identification of Pupil Premium, to enable access to wider school opportunities, via the school's Welfare Fund.
- Enable tutors, Heads of Department and Heads of Year to have a mechanism to identify students in need and request support to enable the raising of both opportunity and aspirations.
- Enable consideration for siblings where there may be financial hardship, recognising the additional challenge that this can place on families.
- Seek innovative ways to provide for families in hardship, such as:
 - providing opportunities for parents to buy an additional book or contribute to a school trip place for another student;
 - Permitting extended payment plans.

Financial Support

The school is able to offer financial assistance for the following:

- Curriculum trips and visits and year group residential;
- Non-curriculum trips;
- Uniform and shoes;
- Equipment, including books (revision guides, English texts and other curriculum resources);
- Music and singing lessons;
- After school clubs;
- Other activities requiring parental financial contribution.

Eligibility

The following financial support is automatically offered to students who are currently eligible for free school meals:

- Equipment and books are supplied at no charge;

- For students going into year 7, a uniform voucher to the value of £75;
- For students going into year 10, a blazer voucher to the value of £50;
- Trips, visits, workshops, after school clubs and other activities are given at a discounted price, usually to a maximum of 50%.

The school will consider requests for financial support from the following groups of students on a case by case basis:

- Students who have received free school meals at any point within the previous 6 years;
- Students with disabilities or with an Education, Health & Care Plan;
- Students who are currently in care, or have previously been in care;
- Students who are carers for others;
- Students from low income families, or families who are receiving Universal Credit, working tax credits or other means tested benefits;
- Students who are experiencing financial hardship, leading to barriers to learning.

Applying for Financial Support

All applications for financial assistance should be made using the application form at Appendix 1, and should be forwarded to the Finance Director, Leanne Chase, at finance@thearcheracademy.org.uk.

In cases where the school already holds the relevant data (e.g. Pupil Premium, EHCP), additional evidence of eligibility will not be required to support the application.

For applications made on the basis of low income or other financial hardship, additional evidence to support individual financial circumstances should be attached to the application form. This will enable the school to assess all requests for financial support with consistency and fairness.

Evidence of household income/financial position may include:

- Universal Credit;
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance;
- Income related employment and support allowance;
- Tax credit statement;
- Other benefit statement;
- State pension credit;
- Latest P60 or 3 most recent payslips;
- Evidence of Self-employed earnings.

All applications for financial assistance will be treated in strict confidence and used only to make decisions related to the application.

Application forms will be held on file for the duration of the student's attendance at the Archer Academy and will then be destroyed, unless they are needed to support financial audits, in which case they will be retained for 6 years, in line with other financial records. All documentation provided in support of an application will be used for the purposes of determining the decision, and will then be destroyed.

Financial Support Decisions

Financial support offered by the school is discretionary and all applications for financial assistance will be considered on a case by case basis, having regard for individual circumstances as well as the wider affordability for the school, such that financial support is directed to those whose need is greatest.

All applications will be assessed by the Headteacher and the Finance Director, to ensure consistency and fairness of decisions.

Decisions will be notified as soon as practicable, and no later than 28 days after receipt of the application.

The school's decision is final, and will not be open to appeal.

Funding

The school will allocate funding from the following sources to meet the costs of financial support:

- Pupil Premium funding;
- Welfare Fund;
- Parental donations for additional books and trips via ParentPay.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Finance Director annually.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Finance and Audit Committee.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy

