

CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Purpose

This Policy informs staff and parents about charging for School activities.

Aim

To follow the basic principle – that education should be free of charge if it takes place during school hours.

No charge will be made for equipment books, materials and instruction in connection with the national curriculum or statutory religious education taught at school, except where parents have indicated in advance their wish to purchase the product. Nor will there be a charge for entry to a prescribed public examination.

Similarly no charge will be made for transport between different parts of the school premises or to other places which the LA or Governing Body has arranged for education to be provided or for transport between home and school where this is considered necessary under the 1944 Education Act.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body, in conjunction with the Head of School, are responsible for the implementation of this policy and the determination of any individual case arising from the implementation of this policy.

Musical Instrumental Tuition

There is an exception to the rule about not charging for activities in school hours. Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil, or pupils in a group of four, to play musical instruments, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil. Parents must agree to charges before the child undertakes the tuition. The amount required will be adjusted annually in line with actual costs.

Voluntary Contributions

Although we do not charge for most of our school-time activities, we may invite parents to make a voluntary contribution. If a particularly activity cannot take place without some help from parents, this is explained to parents during the planning stage. The essential point is that no pupil will be left out of an activity because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. It may be necessary to state that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it. Contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary.

The terms of any request for contribution will be clear:

- a) that there is no obligation to contribute; and
- b) that registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.

There is no limit on the level of voluntary contribution that parents or others can make to school activities, nor is any restriction placed upon the use that can be made of such contributions. A request for a contribution towards the cost of a particular activity could, for example, include the cost of subsidising pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying adults. Alternatively, parents could be asked to contribute towards part of the cost at the time of the visit or activity, and the rest could be met from the proceeds of general fundraising events. Where voluntary contributions to an activity result in a surplus of monies over and above the cost of the activity, the surplus will be placed in the school fund to support other activities.

Education Partly During School Hours

Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge can be made (except that if a pupil travels directly from home to the activity the parents will be expected to pay the cost of that travel).

As an example, a long distance trip might involve much travel before and after normal school hours, but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours, the trip would count as happening in school time and be free of charge. By contrast, a trip which involved leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but then went on until quite late in the evening, would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed. (time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours).

These activities will be open to all pupils regardless of their parent's ability or willingness to pay. In these cases, a voluntary contribution will be sought from parents. If the voluntary contributions fail to cover the whole cost of that activity then it may not take place.

Residential Activities

Special rules apply for residential activities. For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the cost of travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodgings in these circumstances, except for pupils whose parents are receiving income support; income-based job seekers allowance or entitled to any tax credit under the Tax Credits Act 2002.

A trip counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils, amounts to half or more of the number of days taken up by the activity. Each school day is normally divided into two sessions and each 24-hour period is divided into two half-days beginning at noon and midnight.

On this basis, a term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9p.m. on Sunday, would last for nine half-days, including five school sessions, and would count as taking place in school time. A trip from noon on Thursday to 9p.m. on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and would therefore be classified for charging purposes as taking place outside school time.

Where the activity is classified for charging purposes outside school time and not essential to the education provided at the school it will be open to all pupils regardless of their parent's ability or willingness to pay. In these cases, a voluntary contribution will be sought from parents. If the voluntary contributions fail to cover the whole cost of that activity then it may not take place.

Other Charges

Parents are asked to make a contribution towards replacing damaged or lost school property caused wilfully or negligently by their children and for the recovery of an examination fee if a pupil fails without good reason to take the examination.

Remission

There will be a complete remission of any charges for board and lodgings on a residential education trip for pupils whose parents are receiving income support; income-based job seekers allowance or entitled to any tax credit under the Tax Credits Act 2002. The Head of School will advise parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

It is an over-riding principle of the school that all activities should be available to all pupils and the Governing Body will endeavour to support pupils in cases of genuine financial difficulty when families are in receipt of income support or family credit. Such cases shall be considered by a sub-committee of the Governing Body consisting of the Chairperson, the Head of School, a teacher Governor, and one further Governor appointed by the whole Governing Body.

Adopted by Governing Body: Summer 2017