

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The law on charging in connection with education in maintained schools is set out in the Education Acts. Individual governing bodies are required to determine and keep under review a policy in respect of charging and remission arrangements. No charge may be made by the governing body unless it has drawn up a statement of its policy.

The Education Reform Act 1988 established the basic principle that the education by any maintained school for its registered pupils should be free of charge.

Charging

Exceptions to the above approved by the governing body are as follows:

1. Musical Instrument Tuition within School Hours

Individual and group tuition in playing a musical instrument will be charged for provided that it is not part of the National Curriculum.

Charges will be made for sheet music, musical instruments or their hire.

Charges will be in accordance with the scale as approved from time to time by the Local Education Authority.

2. 'Finished Products'

A charge may be levied towards the cost of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design, or food, technology when the finished product is taken home.

3. Board and Lodging

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home, the school will make a charge for board and lodging in all cases, whether or not the residential trip is deemed to have taken place in school hours. The charge will not exceed the cost of the board and lodging provided for each pupil involved. Charges not exceeding the cost may also be levied for travel.

Where a trip is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and is not required for the purposes of a prescribed public examination, charges not exceeding the cost may also be levied for travel.

4. Public Examinations

The following charges will be passed onto parents:

- (i) the charge made by an examining board where a parent asks for an examination result to be re-scrutinised;
- (ii) the cost of entering the pupil for an examination where the governing body agrees to enter a pupil for a prescribed public examination for which he or she has not been prepared by the school.
- (iii) the examination fee where a pupil, with parental agreement, is entered for a public examination which is not prescribed by the Secretary of State and which is not on the Authority's approved list for payment of fees.

Where a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the governing body has paid, or is liable to pay a fee, then the fee will be recovered from the parents.

5.1 Optional Extras (i.e. outside school hours)

A charge will be levied for an activity, defined under legislation as an "optional extra", which is provided wholly or mainly outside school hours. Such charges will not exceed the cost of providing the activity, divided equally between the pupils participating.

Prior written agreement must be obtained from the parents or carers of pupils involved in an optional activity for which a charge is to be made.

5.2 Education Partly During School Hours

Charges will be made for visits that occupy more than 50% of the time out of normal school hours. This includes travelling time.

Where more than 50% of the visit takes place during school hours, no charge will be made. If residential accommodation is involved, a charge will be made for that accommodation.

5.3 Application of 50% Rule.

Where the 50% rule is applied to residential visits, calculations are based on 'sessions'. Sessions are defined as from 00.00 to 12.00 and 12.00 to 24.00. If the number of sessions outside school hours exceeds the number of sessions inside school hours, charges can be made. e.g. A visit taking place from a Friday (if it is a full school day) through to Sunday evening, would involve two sessions in school hours and four out of school hours. Charges can therefore be made.

6. Voluntary Contributions

The School wishes to continue with the important work and experience derived from an off-site visit. In order to overcome the financial difficulties that exist Voluntary Contributions will be requested for any visit taking place during school hours.

The school will suggest to parents an appropriate amount for a voluntary contribution but cannot insist on payment.

No pupil will be prevented from taking part in the visit if a contribution is not forthcoming, or has been insufficient to cover the individual cost for that pupil.

Where insufficient money has been contributed collectively to cover the cost of the visit, the school may cancel the visit and return all the contributions made.

Parents who feel unable to meet costs of a school visit should speak to the Headteacher in confidence to seek the possibility of alternative arrangements being made.

Where contributions are made in excess of the requested sums, money will be refunded.

Charges for optional extras for which voluntary contributions will be sought can include:

- (i) the pupil's travel costs;
- (ii) the pupil's board and lodging costs;
- (iii) materials, books, instruments and other equipment;
- (iv) non-teaching staff costs;
- (v) entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres etc;
- (vi) insurance costs;
- (vii) the cost of engaging a teacher, specifically for the activity.

7. General Notes

7.1 Damage and Replacement:

Within the school's disciplinary code compulsory charges may be made by the school for replacement of broken windows or fittings, defaced or damaged text books or any other damage or loss occurring as a result of pupil's bad behaviour. The school is empowered to recover this loss and resultant costs as a civil debt.

7.2 Unpaid Charges:

Those unpaid charges which are legally recoverable will be recouped, together with resultants costs as a civil debt.