

Charging and Remissions Policy

Date of Last Review: June 2023

Reviewed by: E Hart

Agreed by Governors: 21 June 2023

Frequency of Review: Annually

Date of Next Review: June 2024

POLICY STATEMENT

The School conforms to the Education Act 1996 (Sections 449-462): Charges for School Activities.

The Local Governing Body (LGB) recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards students' education. The LGB aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the students of the school and as additional optional activities. However, due to the limited funds in the delegated budget the LGB reserves the right to make a charge for activities organised by the school. The LGB will from time to time, review and amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

A Guide to the Law for School Governors sets out as follows what LGBs and Local Authorities CANNOT charge for:

- i. An admission application to any state funded school;
- ii. Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- iii. Education provided outside of 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 the school, or part of religious education;
- iv. Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school;
- v. Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school; and
- vi. Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school. However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the student's parents.

CHARGING FOR VISITS

All visits

The group leader should always ensure those parents are notified as early as possible as to:

- The total cost of the visit
- How much of the cost will come from the school or LA funds (as in the case of field trips)
- How much each parent will need to pay or be asked to contribute towards the cost of the visit
- How much spending/pocket money students will reasonably need (especially trips which involve a residential element)
- Use of any surplus funds, i.e. will they be returned to parents or retained for future visits.

Early notification of the above is important as this allows parents to make financial preparations. Many parents find it helpful to gauge the value of the visit if they have information relating to the constituent costs of the visit, i.e. transport, accommodation, food, etc.

During Normal School Hours

In all schools, except Independent Schools, visits which occur during school hours must be provided free of charge. However, parents can be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip but there is no obligation on parents to make any contribution. In reality the value of the requested contributions equates to the total cost of the visit (or more to allow for those parents who cannot or will not contribute) and therefore if insufficient voluntary contributions are forthcoming the visit may have to be cancelled - parents must be notified of this contingency. A student whose parents/carers do not contribute cannot be discriminated against and should not be excluded from an activity because his/her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

The LGB may offer to remit the full cost of full board and lodging for any residential activity which:

- Takes place during school hours or is not an optional extra (see following section for definition)

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of the board and lodging:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- An income-related employment and support allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,385
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

Parental permission should be obtained in one of two ways:

- i) Parents sign a declaration which contains;
 - Current legislation which permits the school to ask for voluntary contributions towards the costs involved
 - That no student will be discriminated against on the grounds of inability to pay
 - Sufficient money is **not** raised by voluntary contributions which will lead to visits being cancelled.
- ii) Signed slip received back from parents:

A letter about the visit is sent out to parents and contains a reply slip (with space for parental signature) and also a section on meeting the costs of the visit, the essence of which is contained in the following example:

"All students will need to take a packed lunch with them. Students who receive Free School Meals will be provided with a packed lunch. As we are travelling by coach, a small cost will be incurred. Current legislation permits us to ask only for voluntary contributions towards the costs involved. No student will be discriminated against on the grounds of inability to pay, but if sufficient money is not raised by voluntary contributions, then the visit will have to be cancelled. A contribution of £___ should be sufficient to ensure that the trip can proceed."

Outside of Normal School Hours/Optional Extras

The Headteacher can charge parents for board and lodging on residential visits as well as the full cost when a visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'. An optional extra:

- Falls wholly or mainly outside school hours, i.e. a skiing holiday during the school holidays is an optional extra
- Does not form part of the National Curriculum or the statutory requirements for religious education
- Is not part of a syllabus towards a Prescribed Public Examination - if an 'A' level
- Biology syllabus mentions fieldwork as a requirement then this in itself does not necessitate a residential field trip to another part of the country as local facilities may suffice. However, if the syllabus mentions that students need to know about the ecology of rocky shores and they live in a city a long way from the coast then the field trip would not be classed as an 'optional extra'.
- The parents' agreement to meet the costs of an optional extra visit before that visit is planned in detail will always be obtained in writing. The stated cost of an optional extra visit must not include an element of subsidy for students whose families do not meet the full charge.

Parental permission should be obtained as follows:

- i) Parents sign a declaration which contains
 - Current legislation permits the School to ask for the full cost of the visit;
 - Current legislation does not require the School to arrange subsidies for the visit;
 - If insufficient numbers of students opt for the visit then the visit may have to be cancelled.
 - A child cannot attend this 'optional extra' visit if full payment is not made

TRANSPORT IN A MINIBUS

If any payment is requested or made towards the cost of passengers being carried in a minibus then a public service vehicle (PSV) licence is required by the School. A licence is required if the school owns or rents the minibus. There are two types of PSV:

- i. Restricted (for up to two vehicles);
- ii. Standard national (more than two vehicles). The school cannot charge for:
 - Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide transport
 - Transporting registered students to other premises where the governing body or LA as arranged for students to be educated
 - Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school
 - Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUMENTAL TUITION

Parents will be charged in full for the cost of peripatetic music lessons. Students taking GCSE or A level music courses will be entitled to free lessons for one instrument only. Additional instrumental tuition is payable by the parents/carers.

INGREDIENTS, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The LGB reserves the right to charge for ingredients, materials or equipment (or the provision of them by parents) or require them to be provided if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the 'finished product'.

This is directly relevant for the cost of materials/ingredients for the following subjects: CDT, Science, Art/Craft, Food Technology.

BROKEN EQUIPMENT

The LGB will allow all departments to ask students and/or their parents to contribute towards the cost of replacement items where these were damaged or broken as a direct result of misconduct on the student's part. This does not in any way detract from the teaching staff's duty to brief students thoroughly and to manage a calm and safe working environment for the students.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

The LGB may charge for some activities that are known as "optional extras".

Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - part of the National Curriculum;
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school; or
 - part of religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- Transport that is not required to take the student to school or to other premises where the LA/LGB have arranged for the student to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit.
- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. It will therefore not include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

REMISSIONS

The LGB may remit in full or in part the cost of any activity for particular groups of parents, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited, in confidence, for the remission of charges in full or in part. Authorisation for such remission will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.