



Charges & Remissions Policy

Ownership: Governing Body

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Signature:

Date: September 2023

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Charging, remissions and refunds: policy statements

The Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging in all schools maintained by local education authorities. The objectives of the charging provisions in the Act are:

- to maintain the right to free school education
- to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' or guardians' ability or willingness to help to meet the cost
- to give LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours, while emphasising that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity
- to confirm the right of LAs and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.

These policy statements comply with the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and they are based on the County Council's guidance.

Charging

The school's policy is to charge for the following areas of activity:

- board and lodging on residential visits (but see below)
- costs associated with tuition in playing a musical instrument whether in or out of school hours
- optional extra activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education. Participation in any such activities to be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made
- the cost in cash or in kind of ingredients and materials needed for practical subjects such as home economics and craft, design and technology, if parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

Remissions

The Governing Body charging policy is referred to in the school prospectus. Broadly, schools cannot demand payments for trips etc. which occur in school time. However, if money is not forthcoming or there are family hardships, this can be discussed with the Head who is authorised to waive all or part payment. Also see Charging policy in Off-site visits policy.

Parents who are in receipt of the following will not be charged the board and lodging component for residential trips which take place mainly in school hours:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual taxable income that exceeds the published threshold
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after qualification for Working Tax Credit ends)
- Universal Credit

Voluntary contributions

The Governing Body may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours, including non-curriculum activities
- school equipment
- school funds generally.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make an activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

Residential trips and school journeys

The Governing Body may charge parents for board and lodging costs for residential trips, this may be an element of the contribution requested for such journeys.

Accounting

The guidance on accounting and record-keeping for school journeys given in the HCC Financial Handbook for Schools has been adopted.

Refunds

At the end of each journey or visit, the surplus or deficit should be calculated from the journey book or visit sheet and confirmed against the ledger records.

If the journey or visit makes a surplus, then parents and guardians will be offered a refund where the sum involved per pupil is 5% or £5 (rounded to the nearest whole £ whichever is greater) of the original contribution. In order to ease the financial administration of the journey, the school may ask for parental permission to treat any surplus below a given sum as a contribution to school funds. Any refunds will be made as soon as possible after the visit, either to pupils or parents by cheque or cash against signed receipts.

On occasions when pupils are subsidised by the school, refunds are made based pro rata to the amount refunded to those paying the full amount.

Instrumental music lessons

A charge may be made for instrumental music tuition whether in or out of school hours, unless the tuition is part of the National Curriculum or the syllabus for religious education.

Parents or guardians eligible for remissions may take advantage of the LA's remission arrangements in relation to individual instrumental or vocal tuition.