

This policy takes guidance from the DFE Policy – ‘Charging for School Activities’ which has been recently revised and Local Authority guidance on school lettings. Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. This guidance complements the information given in “A Guide to the Law for School Governors” (Chapter 23) and reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996.

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the School’s Finance Committee and will be adjusted in line with new Government or Local Authority recommendations. It sets out the School’s position on charges and remissions.

Voluntary Contributions and Responsibilities of Staff

Nothing in legislation prevents a Governing Body or Local Authority from asking for voluntary contributions that would benefit the School or any School activities and the School will invite parents and others from time to time to make voluntary contributions to enable the provision of activities and visits which may not otherwise be possible. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this will be made clear to parents at the outset. The Management Committee or Headteacher will make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. No pupil will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, it may not go ahead. Staff organising visits should make this clear to parents. Staff organising a trip will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on the visit will be.

Activities outside of normal lesson times and not within the National Curriculum (ranging from visits abroad to school matches) are classed as ‘optional extras’. Parents may be asked to meet the full cost of these activities. In the case of residential experiences, every effort will be made to offer value for money but the cost might be quite high. It is intended that School-based extra curricular activities should be free or very low cost. The School will do its best to offer assistance or remission of charges in any case where there is hardship.

For activities during normal School hours and/or within the National Curriculum, parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of the activity to enable it to go ahead. Each year, such visits may include visits to museums and galleries for Art, and theatre trips in English and Drama. The costs of visits will vary according to the pupils subject choices.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to School funds, parents will not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is not compulsory. The School will ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents when requesting for contributions (as opposed to a charge where this is allowed by law).

Charges and contributions should cover the anticipated costs. If contributions from an activity exceed the actual cost, the School will refund all surpluses.

Parents may be asked to meet the costs of private music tuition in full, where tuition is given either to an individual pupil or to pupils in small groups. General fundraising and sponsorship may be used to permit additional activities.

Charging Structure

For residential courses during the time of normal School hours, parents can be asked to meet the full cost of board and lodging, and to make a voluntary contribution towards any travel expenses. The School will meet the costs for pupils whose parents receive the income support benefits, where it is still possible for the visit to go ahead. The School will do its best to offer assistance and remissions in any case where there is hardship.

Parents may be charged for some or all of the cost of damage to School property where this has been intentional, for exam entries where a pupil has failed without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Governing Body or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee,

according to the procedures given in the School's Examinations Policy **Parents** will be expected to meet some or all of the cost for replacing lost or damaged books or equipment.

Activities and Visits

If the number of School sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during normal School hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the day, regulations require that a school day be divided into two sessions: a 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during School hours. Activities during normal School hours may only involve a request for a voluntary contribution; parents may be charged an amount to cover the costs incurred to the School for activities mainly taking place outside of School hours.

Parents should be informed of the decision to ask for contributions at the planning stage of activities. Planned activities may be cancelled if financial support is not forthcoming. Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards activities taking place during School time, or towards activities which are a necessary part of the National Curriculum, or towards activities that form part of the School's basic curriculum for Religious Education. Parents will be asked to meet the full cost of optional extra activities that occur outside of normal School hours, where these activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum. Parents will be asked to meet the full cost of board and lodging, and to make a voluntary contribution towards travel expenses for residential visits which fall, in the main, during normal School sessions. Pupils whose parents are receiving the following benefits should not be prevented from taking part in any School activity or trip that is open to other pupils:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers' Allowance (IBJSA);
- 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 the limit set by HMR&C
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- any similar income related employment and support allowances introduced by the Government.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- 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; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during School hours, the charge will include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from School accompanying pupils on a residential visit. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of

an optional extra where charges will be made.

When the School informs parents about a forthcoming visit, the member of staff leading the trip should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of income support benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. However, where voluntary contributions would not cover the cost of a visit, it would be likely that the visit would be cancelled where the trip was not an essential element of the curriculum.

Music Tuition

The law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, but music lessons are an exception to this rule. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition. Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s).

Miscellaneous Charges (other than for Pupils)

Staff may use the school photocopier for private use with the prior permission of the Business Manager. Charges per sheet are as follows:

Copies	A4	A3
Black	1p	2p
Colour	2p	4p

Paper/Card	A4	A3
White Paper	1p	2p
Coloured Paper	2p	4p
Card	5p	10p
Laminating	25p	50p

Value Added Tax

The Governors are constrained by law to apply value added tax to all transactions where appropriate.