

1. Introduction

The Governing Body acknowledges the right of every student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

The governors also recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education and aim to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

2. The Legal Position

- a) The general principle that no charge can be made for education in school hours (excluding the midday break) in maintained schools was first set out in the *Education Reform Act 1988*. Guidance came in the *Circular 2/89, Education Reform Act 1988: Charges for School Activities*.

The Circular explains that:

No charge can be made for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- within school hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out-of-school hours;
- for statutory religious education; and

c) Admission

No charge can be made in connection with admission to a maintained school.

d) Voluntary contributions

Parents may volunteer to pay for any educational activity. The school may request voluntary contributions for any visits/activities both inside and outside school time. However, NO pupil may be excluded from the activity for not having paid the contribution.

e) Permitted charges

The following are permitted charges:

- charges for board and lodging on trips;
- costs of lost and destroyed school property and breakages;
- any costs associated with individual tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school hours (UNLESS it is provided as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum);

- the cost of optional extras provided outside school hours (or mainly outside school hours), but the charge must not exceed the cost of the provision, and parents must agree to their child receiving the optional extra;

In all cases where a permitted charge is likely to be made the parents must be told the amount in advance.

3. School Policy

The law allows governing bodies to charge only for the defined activities if they have first made a policy on charging and remissions.

Parents will be made aware of the policy, and where they can consult it. This requirement is set out in the school prospectus.

4. Third parties

The school is permitted to charge for the provision of educational services by a third party, but schools must ensure that the monies are paid directly to the third party organisation.

In such cases, if the activity is in school time, the school has to formally grant leave of absence to the pupils taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the school's official programme.

It is likely, too, that any staff taking part in the activity would also have to be granted leave of absence. The Head must consider carefully the position of accompanying staff, depending on the precise nature and duration of the visit.

5. The Governors Charging Policy

The Governing Body therefore reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

a) Activities outside School Hours

- The full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours and therefore not part of the statutory curriculum

6. Voluntary Contributions

The Governing Body reserves the right to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;
- school equipment;
- school funds generally.

Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

7. Private Use of Facilities

Private use of the telephone and photocopying facilities by pupils are not permitted. In the rare case that a private telephone call is made it is deemed to be an emergency and no charge is made.

8. Remissions

Parents of pupils who are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having free school meals entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of charges:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Family Credit.

When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part.

The Head in consultation with the Chair of Governors will make authorisation for such remission.

9. Equal Opportunities

The Head will ensure that the school's equal opportunities policies are observed in implementing the policy.

10. Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for making and reviewing the policy.

The Head (or Office Manager) is responsible for the implementation of the policy and ensuring that staff, parents and pupils know the details as appropriate.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Office Manager will report on the policy to the Head as appropriate.

The Head will report to the governors' finance committee on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

The governing body will review the policy every two years.