Charging and Remissions Policy

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is for the School and Governing Body to set their policies on charging and remission for school activities and school visits.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities. This policy reflects the detail of the Act and also reflects the Department for Education Advice in Charging for School Activities pub. October 2014.

The School must ensure they inform on low incomes and in receipt of benefits detailed in the policy of the support available to them when being asked for voluntary contributions towards the cost of school visits and activities.

Aims

The School believes all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents/carers' financial means. This Charging and Remissions Policy states how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered whilst trying to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Policy Application

It is the policy of the School not to charge for:

- An admission application to the School
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is a compulsory part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that a student is being prepared for at the School, or part of religious education
- 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, or part of religious education
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the School
- Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the School unless the re-sit(s) is as a result of a parent/carer request (in which case an examination fee will apply).

The School will charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the student's parents/carers wish the student to own them
- Optional Extras (see below)
- Music and Vocal Tuition (dependent on the management of peripatetic tuition in the School)

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:
  a) Part of the National Curriculum
  b) Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the School c) Part of religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination (s) at the
  School or the parent/carer requests re-sit or change of examination level which is not supported by the School
- Transport that is not required to the student to the School or to other premises where the Local Authority/
  Governing Body have arranged for the student to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit

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
- 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.

Any charge made in respect of individual students must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating.

It must not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge will not include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the School accompanying students on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet any levied charges as appropriate. Parental agreement is, therefore, a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions

The School is permitted to ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the School or any school activities.
If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this should be made clear to parents/carers at the outset.

The School must make it clear to parents/carers that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

No student should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay. The School will make this clear to parents/carers. The student must still be given equal chance to go on the visit.

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it may be cancelled.
When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents/carers must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory.

Residential Visits

The School cannot charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that a student is being prepared for at the School, or part of religious education
- Supply teacher to cover for those teachers who are absent from the School accompanying students on a residential visit

The School can charge for:

- Board and Lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be eligible for a full cost of board and lodging when the trip is a compulsory and non-negotiable part of the National Curriculum or a public examination requirement for which the student has been prepared in the School:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit subject to circumstance and Government guidance on benefit allowances
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

The receipt of the above benefits may entitle a student to Free School Meals and this is managed in the School through the use of Pupil Premium monies which the School receives annually. If an equipment is a core part of the curriculum i.e. musical instrument, ingredients, textiles material or wood for DT the student will be eligible for a full discount.

Music Tuition

The law states all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons delivered to an individual or small group musical instrument tuition are an exception to this
Charges may be made for teaching either an individual student or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing.

Charges may only be made if the teaching is not essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student (s).

Transport

The School will not charge for:

- Transporting registered students to or from the School premises, where the Local Education Authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the Governing Body or Local Education Authority has arranged for the students to be educated
- Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when the student has been prepared for that examination at the School
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit (unless this is an optional visit) although a voluntary contribution may be sought.

Education Partly During School Hours

Where an activity takes place partly during school hours and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours.

A charge will only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that a student is being prepared for at the School and not part of religious education.

Non-Residential Activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel occurs during school hours. School hours do not include a break in the middle of the day.
Where less than 50% of the time spent on the activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside of school hours. For example, an excursion might require students to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential 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 school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening)

Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1
Students are away from the School on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2
Students are away from the School from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Pupil Premium

The School currently operates a policy which entitles all students in receipt of free school meals to be considered for a cost reduction in respect of any trip or activity where there is a compulsory charge. Each case is considered on its merits and in relation to the activity.