



Sandbrook Community Primary School

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School Charging and Remissions Policy



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1. Background

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England.

This advice has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in section 7.5 of the Governors Handbook.

This advice accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms.

References within this advice to the role of the governing body should be taken to refer to the academy trust, in the case of academies.

2. Introduction

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum.

No charges can be made unless the governing body of the school or local authority has drawn up a charging policy giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for, and a remissions policy.

The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the local authority's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). This information should be made available to parents.

The remissions policy must set out any circumstances in which the school or local authority propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging policy. For example, a school may decide to provide an Italian language evening class as an optional extra. The governing body may decide to reduce the cost for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

3.School Trips & Voluntary contributions

When organising school visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school visit or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the visit or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded and the school can provide this information on request.

1. All pupils (excluding pupil premium children) will be asked for a voluntary contribution of 50% of the total cost of the trip to the school (rounded down to the nearest whole pound).
2. If a child is in receipt of Pupil Premium funding their annual school visits will be subsidised. Parents are notified by an annual letter if their child is in receipt of pupil premium funding and that they can still make a voluntary contribution if they feel they wish too.

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions

4. Residential visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we do not make any charge for the education or travel expenses. However, we do make a charge to cover the costs of board and lodging. Pupils who receive Pupil Premium are exempt from payment.

1. All pupils (excluding pupil premium children) will be asked for a voluntary contribution which equates to a percentage of the total cost of the trip to the school (rounded down to the nearest whole pound).
2. If a child is in receipt of Pupil Premium funding their annual school visits will be subsidised. Parents are notified by an annual letter if their child is in receipt of pupil premium funding and that they can still make a voluntary contribution if they feel they wish too.

Schools 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 the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools can charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit those pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

5. Music tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.

Pupils who are in receipt of Pupil Premium are eligible to learn a musical instrument free of charge

At present there is no charge for individual or group music tuition.

6.Swimming

The school organises swimming lessons for children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. At present we make no charge for this activity. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons.

7.Transport

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

8.Optional extras

Charges may be made 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:
 - a) part of the national curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

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

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

Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can 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