

Policy for Charging and Remissions

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it should be free. It is therefore not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or admission costs for swimming lessons or for visits to museums, etc. during school hours.

The Local Authority or governing body may not charge for anything unless they have drawn up a statement of general policy on charging. The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the LAs, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

Voluntary Contributions

Head teachers or governing bodies may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

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

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary, though, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute may not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it must be cancelled.

Residential Trips

Schools are permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision.

Where the trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of these charges:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit provided the annual family income, assessed by The Inland Revenue, does not exceed £16,190 as at 6 April 2013.

A similar entitlement applies where the trip takes place outside of school hours but it is necessary as part of the National Curriculum, forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed examination that the school is preparing the pupil to sit, or the syllabus for religious education.

Instrumental Music Lessons

A charge may be made for instrumental music tuition for up to and including four pupils, unless the tuition forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination (e.g. GCSE), that the school is preparing the child to sit, or is part of the National Curriculum or the syllabus for religious education, in which case a charge is not permissible.

Public Examinations

No charges may be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in regulations. However, an examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list, but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
- a pupil fails 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,
- the examination is a resit where no further preparation has been provided by the school.

Charges may not be made for any cost associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. However, charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in regulations.

Legislation

Provisions concerning charging for school activities can be found in sections 402, 450 to 458 and 460 of the **Education Act 1996** and in **The Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policy) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999** (SI 1999 No. 2255).

Key Documents

Further detail can be found in **A Guide to the Law for School Governors**.

Appendix:

Policy Guidance and Recommended Statement for inclusion as a statutory requirement within the School Prospectus