



CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

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Reviewed by: Miss K Hayward

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Charging and Remissions Policy

Background

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

Schools must ensure that they inform parents/guardians on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 4 of this guide of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents/guardians.

Responsibilities

The Federation Board is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Executive Principal for its implementation. Any determinations with respect to individual parents/guardians will be considered jointly by the Executive Principal and The Federation Board.

All students are entitled to full access to the compulsory school curriculum, regardless of the parents/guardians capacity to pay. No student will be disadvantaged due to financial hardship. Therefore, no charge is normally made for any educational activity which takes place during school hours.

Publication of Information

A summary of this policy will be included on the Federation website which will specify what charges are/are not to be made and for which activities voluntary contributions will be invited from parents/ guardians.

Education

The Federation Board recognises that the legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is 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;
- 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;
- education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any trip 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 student 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 students on a residential trip;

The Federation **can** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;

- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition

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 student is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the student to school or to other premises where the local authority/Governing Body have arranged for the student to be provided with education; and
- 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;
- support 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.

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/guardians 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 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 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 the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

a) Books and Equipment

Most parents/guardians want to buy their children their own pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, calculators, etc. although, subject departments will loan such equipment on request.

Books and stationery are provided free but Year 12 and 13 (Sixth Form) students who wish to keep a textbook after the end of the course will be asked to pay for it.

The option to purchase certain revision texts (A deposit may be requested and

returned when the text is handed back).

b) Charging for Materials

Parents/guardians of students who are on practical courses (e.g. Resistant Materials, Food Technology, Photography, Art, etc.) and who wish their children to own the finished product may be charged for the materials used.

c) Activities

Activities within the school day or part of an examination course:

Any payment from parents/guardians for these activities is voluntary but if parents/guardians are unable or unwilling to contribute, it may be that the activity will not be able to take place. Obviously, students will never be treated differently according to whether or not their parents/guardians have made any such payments.

Activities outside the school day and not part of an examination course:

For these activities, the specified payment is required for students to take part.

d) Residential Visits

The Federation policy is not to have students entered for examination courses requiring residential study mainly within school time.

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 the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and

The school **can** charge for:

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

When the school informs parents/guardians about a forthcoming visit, we will make it clear that parents/guardians who can prove they are in receipt of benefits, listed below, will be eligible for a discounted rate towards the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Child Tax Credit (but **not** Working Tax Credit) and your annual gross income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) is not more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit Run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Support under part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit

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 itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is

deemed to have taken place outside 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). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, 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: Visit during school hours

A school trip in term time from noon on Wednesday to 9 pm on Sunday would last for 9 half days.

This would be:

- (i) 5 half days including school session; and
- (ii) 4 half days not including school session.

This would count as an activity taking place in school time.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

A school trip in term time from noon on Thursday to 9 pm Sunday would count as 7 half days.

This would be:

- (i) 3 half days including schools sessions; and
- (ii) 4 half days not including school sessions.

This trip would be classified as taking place outside school time.

e) Public Examinations

The Principal has the delegated responsibility to decide whether students are entered for particular examinations.

The Executive Principal has the authority to charge for examination

entries in certain circumstances. The Executive Principal is authorised

to charge for re-sits.

Parents/guardians will be asked to pay for examination fees where a student fails to complete the examination requirements, e.g. incomplete coursework, frequent absence or truancy from school or failure to sit an examination.

f) Music Tuition

The Executive Principal is authorised to charge contributions towards and charges for extra-curricular music lessons. 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), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

g) Loss and Damage to School Property

The parents/guardians of a student who damages or loses any item of school

property or equipment, including, for example, windows or computer software, are liable for the cost of repair or replacement. Parents/guardians of students who lose or damage books or equipment issued to them are expected to pay the cost of replacement or repair.

h) Minibuses

Only the school's students, staff or parents/guardians may travel at a charge in a school's minibus.

Schools may charge for transport in their minibuses only if they hold a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. The permit exempts the school from Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator and driver licensing requirements. A permit is not required if no charge is made. Schools may not raise funds to make a profit by charging for travel in their minibuses.

Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running the vehicle, including loss of value. But the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit making activity, even if a profit would go into the school's other running costs or for charitable purposes. A charge is any payment made in cash or kind (for example, a club subscription) by or on behalf of a person which gives him or her a right to be carried.

Voluntary Contributions

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, The Federation Board or Executive Principal will make this clear to parents/guardians at the outset. The Federation Board or Executive Principal will also make it clear to parents/guardians 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/guardians are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. The school will make sure that this is made clear to parents/guardians. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The school will make it clear to parents/guardians at the outset what the policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents/guardians must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**. The school will also ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents/guardians when requesting for contributions.

Complaints policy

Under the Education Act 1996, a procedure is laid down which relates to complaints about the action of a Governing Body in respect of the school curriculum and related matters. This document is available on request.

Most concerns or potential problems can be settled best in informal discussions with the Executive Principal and/or other staff in the school.