



## **CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY**

In developing this policy for charging and remission for school activities and school visits the Governing Body followed guidance from Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 setting out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England.

It is our policy to ensure that we inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 2 of this guide of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

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.
- Board and lodging for a pupil 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; 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 pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupil 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 a 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.

## **1. Voluntary Contributions**

The Governors will seek voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or nonresidential to cover, for example, the cost of travel, swimming tuition fees, entrance fees or insurance. It will be made clear that such contributions will be genuinely voluntary and that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request. However, the Governors or Headteacher will also make clear to parents at the outset if any activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions and at the same time it will be made equally clear that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it. At the Headteacher's discretion, the school will remit the appropriate contributions if the activity does not take place. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is any restriction placed upon the use which can be made of such contributions. If anyone is genuinely unable to contribute towards the cost of an activity, they may indicate so in confidence to the Headteacher. The Governors will do all in their power to assist in these cases.

## **2. Fee Paying Nursery Places**

Following changes in legislation and school regulations (date), the Governing Body of Riverview CofE Primary can now charge for any additional hours by the child, over and above the 15 hours free entitlement. The Governing Body of Riverview will charge for additional hours used by the child and family, in line with the following:

- As a maintained nursery school, the Governing Body will prioritise the offering of free entitlement places where children are eligible and on the school application list.



# Riverview C of E Primary and Nursery School

Ewell Family Centre with Riverview Daycare

Every child matters, every moment counts

Headteacher: Mrs M Atkins

- Free entitlement places will be offered according to the schools admissions policy laid down by the school.
- Places that might otherwise be unfilled by following the admissions process, (e.g. when all eligible applicants have been offered), and before the termly census date, can be offered for a fee.
- A "place" is considered as a block of 3 hours on Wednesday afternoon or 2 full days. This will be charged for at a 3 hourly rate of £15.00 and £30 for a full day. This has been agreed by the Governing Body with the expectation that families will commit to the purchase of that "place" from start of the half term until the end of that half term.
- "Top-up hours" may be offered to a child who already has a 15 hours free entitlement place at the nursery school, where an additional 15 hour per week block could be purchased, to facilitate a full time place at the nursery school. This may occur only where a place is available, and where the school can accommodate additional full time children.
- The fee charged will be set by the Governing Body at the rate paid to the school by the LA, for the 15 hours free entitlement. This will ensure the school can budget effectively, and maintain services whether the places are free entitlement places or fee paid places. The school will maintain its commitment to provide as many Free Entitlement places as possible.
- The school and Governing Body will monitor the impact of paid places on the quality of provision and delivery of the EYFS ratios and quality.
- Payment for a place to secure a place prior to the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday is not possible and would only be considered by the Governing Body in exceptional circumstances where the place might otherwise remain empty.
- The Governing Body that charges should cover costs of the provision but not make a profit.

### **3. Charging in Kind**

The cost of ingredients, materials etc. needed for practical subjects such as Food Technology or Craft is budgeted for and borne by the school. Parents who are willing to



contribute in cash or kind, may be however invited to do so on a voluntary basis. The school may charge for or require the supply of ingredients or materials if parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product, if there is one. The school will obtain written confirmation from parents that they wish to supply or pay for materials on this basis. Pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not materials are being provided by their parents.

#### **4. Board and Lodging on Residential Visits**

For a visit arranged for Riverview C of E Primary and Nursery School pupils on behalf of the Governing Body which requires pupils to spend one or more nights away from their usual overnight accommodation, it is the policy of the Governors to charge the actual cost of providing board and lodging to each participating pupil. The Governors will observe the statutory requirement to remit charges for board and lodging in the case of pupils whose parents are in receipt of :

- Income based job seekers allowance
- Support under part VI of the immigration and Asylum act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, providing that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income does not exceed £16,190
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14)
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008

where the activity is deemed to take place in school hours.

Guidance on school policies for Learning Outside the Classroom, including charging is available here.

#### **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 no any day.

### **Example 1: Visit during school hours**

Pupils are away from noon 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: Visit outside school hours**

Pupils are away from 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.

### **Policy for staying overnight**

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home the school is allowed to make a charge for board and lodging. This is with the exception of pupils whose parents are receiving: Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190 YE 13/14) and an income related employment and support allowance. Since April 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitles families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria. The headteacher must inform all parents of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving these benefits.

The costs will be borne by the school from their contingency funds.

### **Pupils eligible for free school meals receive remission for board and lodgings expenses for residential school visits. How can the school fund/organise residential visits?**

The government provides funding for schools to each local authority according to a formula which recognizes the different needs of each area. The same basic funding is provided for all comparable pupils across the country. This is then topped up according to local needs.





One of these top-ups reflects the numbers of pupils in a certain area living in deprived circumstances, as these pupils need extra help if they are to have an equal opportunity in life. The amount that individual schools receive from the local authority reflects their relative need compared with other local schools, through the locally agreed funding formula. All local authorities' funding formulae are required to include an element to reflect the needs of deprived pupils. It is for head teachers and school governing bodies to decide how to spend their available resources.

Schools cannot exclude children from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that the parent or carer cannot make, or refuses to make, a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

If there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

### **Governing bodies charging for educating children in maintained schools**

The local authority or governing body cannot charge for education that takes place in school hours nor can they charge for activities that take place outside school hours if these are part of the National Curriculum, necessary as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. They can charge for permitted "optional extras", provided they have drawn up a statement of general policy on charging and given details of "optional extras" they intend to charge for. The governing body's policy does not have to be the same as the local authority's policy, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

### **School charges for an activity that takes place out of school hours**

This kind of activity is often referred to as an "optional extra". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. See guidance on optional extras.



## **5. Breakages**

The school reserves the right to ask parents to pay for the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost textbooks where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour. These charges are not covered in the Education Reform Act 1988.

## **6. Music Tuition**

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. 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 pupil(s), or the first access to the KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

### **Education partly during school hours**

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil 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 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 pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

## **Additional Guidance**

### **Parents voluntary contributions**

Schools may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. It should be remembered that education provided during school hours must be free. This includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the local authority or by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. Governing bodies should also clearly explain that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently, and that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

### **Do parents have to pay**

Headteachers or governing bodies may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

Any activity which takes place during school hours;  
School equipment; and  
School funds generally

Children of parents who are unable, or unwilling, to contribute may not be discriminated against. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of the visit, or activity, and there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall, then the school should cancel the activity/visit. It would be advisable to make parents aware of a possible cancellation to the activity/visit if insufficient voluntary contributions are received from the outset.

### **If school is unable to raise enough voluntary contributions to cover costs**

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions, and there is no way to make up the





shortfall, for example school funds and/or fundraising activities, then it must be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions should be made clear in the information sent to parents.

### **Affect on children if a parent is unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution**

The school cannot exclude a child from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

### **Support the school can offer if the parent/carers has difficulty making a financial contribution**

Schools must ensure that parents in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14). Some schools also have funds available to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. Parents should be encouraged to speak to the headteacher in order to establish if such funding arrangements exist.

No charge may be made if there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination. In addition, if the activity is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel for any pupil, not just those whose parents are in receipt of benefits.

### **Charge for transport during school hours**

Any transport provided by the school in school hours will be provided free of charge (though a voluntary contribution could be requested). Guidance on school travel and transport is available.



## **Charges for items such as cooking ingredients or materials needed for technology lesson**

The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

## **Entry fees for examinations**

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; and
- 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.

## **Charges to pay for the administration required as part of the admission process**

Para 1.82 of the current School Admissions Code and para 1.93 of the revised School Admissions Code (which comes into force in February 2009) rules out practices that can lead to covert selection, such as asking parents for a financial contribution as a condition of entry. We are clear that schools cannot ask for a voluntary contribution as part of the admissions process and where this is found, we will not tolerate it. Legislation prevents maintained schools from charging fees for admission or for providing education during school hours.

## **Direct Debits to school fund**

A school may not ask for Direct Debits to School Fund. A school may ask for voluntary contributions, as long as it is clear that they are voluntary, but we are clear that state education should be free and we have no intention of changing this policy. We will not tolerate this when it is brought to our notice. No contributions may be sought as part of the admissions process.