

# Charges and Remission Info/Policy

## Rationale

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, admission costs for swimming lessons or visits to museums, etc. during school hours.

The LA 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 LA's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

## Voluntary contributions

Parents may be asked for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity that 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 parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16 190
- Guaranteed Pension Credit.

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

## 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.

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.

All trips and activities that involve charges are to be properly accounted for ie all payments are to be receipted and a balance sheet is to be provided at the end of the activity.

### **Financial Help**

The school has no allocated funds to help families in financial difficulty. The County Durham Schools Benevolent Trust will make a grant of £30 towards the cost of shoes or a winter coat to families who meet the conditions noted above. Applications are made by the individual family direct to the Trust. Guidance on application can be given by the school.