

Charging and Remissions Policy



Charging for School Activities

The following provides guidance on Inspire Trust's (Oakwood High School & Sitwell Junior School only) Charging and Remissions policy.

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools or for tuition fees for students age 16-18. Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities maintained by local authorities in England. This also incorporates regulations included in the DfE 16-19 funding guidance. 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 school will ensure that parents on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits will be advised of any financial support available to them when making contributions to educational visits.

EDUCATION

The school cannot charge for the following:

- An admission application to school.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of 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 public examination, or part of religious education.
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at school.
- Examination re-sits if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit at the school.

Schools and local authorities can charge for:

- Materials, books or equipment where the pupil wishes to own them.
- Optional extras (see below).
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances.
- Examination re-sits (16-18 only)
 - if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit at the school.
 - Where required attendance or completion of work has not been achieved
 - Where the student fails without good reason to sit the exam
 - Resulting from an initial exam failure
 - With the aim of achieving marginal improvement in grades
 - Qualifications leading to GCSE English and maths grade 4 to 9

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “optional extras”.

Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of School time that is not, part of the National Curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or part of religious education.
- Examination entry fees if the pupil has not been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or other premises where arrangements have been made for education to be provided elsewhere.
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Material, books, clothing or equipment.
- Non-teaching staff.
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers.
- The cost or proportion of costs for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Charges may not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity and must be divided equally between the pupils taking part. It must not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Should the activity take place during school hours the cost cannot include the cost of alternative provision for pupils who do not wish to participate and are provided alternative provision.

Participation in such activities is on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

It is possible to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- Any activity which takes place during school hours.
- School equipment i.e. technology money, calculators.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary 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 subsidise the shortfall, the activity must be cancelled. However, if the activity cannot be run without voluntary contributions, parents should be informed at the outset.

RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

It is 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 Free School Meals, will be entitled to help towards these costs. A similar entitlement applies where the trip takes place outside of school hours, but is necessary as part of the national curriculum.

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 school originally paid the entry fee.
- Charges will be made for replacement exam certificates requested.

Charges cannot 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.

TRANSPORT

Schools cannot charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where they are being educated.
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an exam requirement.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

CHARGES AND REMISSIONS

Following the above guidance, charges can be made within school for the following:

- Residential trips if taken place out of school hours.
- Residential trips inside of school hours - a voluntary contribution only.
- Educational visits - a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the visit only.
- Cost towards materials in Technology and other subjects for items that will be taken home.
- Music tuition provided by Rotherham Music Service Peripatetic staff.
- Keyboard/singing lessons
- Costs towards equipment, clothing, books, materials, printing, fines for library books.

The following items may be supplied by Learning Zones to pupils at a reduced cost: replacement books, stationery, revision guides, calculators, etc.

For pupils who are in receipt of free school meals, a reduction in cost of up to half may apply. It may also be necessary in certain circumstances for the cost to be reduced to nil. Pupils will be allowed to pay for visits and other items on a weekly basis.

For children who do not provide a voluntary contribution to an educational visit, they will not be discriminated against, although if not enough contributions are received the visit/activity may be cancelled.

Prior to organising an educational visit, approval should be sought from SLT and for residential/overseas trips, governor approval is necessary.

When calculating the cost of a visit or an optional extra please speak to a member of the Finance Department for advice.

When organising a School visit an Evolve offsite visit form will need to be completed in order for approval from local authority to be received. The forms for residential / overseas trips should be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the trip taking place. This process will go through various checklists to enable authorisation of the visit to take place. Items covered include: details of visit, risk assessments, emergency contacts, staff and pupil numbers, travel information and first aid details. All visits must have a qualified First Aider.