

Summary of Charging Policy for School Activities

Voluntary Contributions

The Principal or Governing Body 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 the 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 may be cancelled**.

There is no legal reason why a school should not invite parents/carers to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of providing activities within and outside school hours.

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, pupils whose parents are in receipt of the following support benefits will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be exempt of these **board and lodging** charges:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credits
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

(or current FSM eligibility criteria)

In general, no compulsory charge can be made where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, where such education is part of the national curriculum.

Clothing

Although no charge can be made for “equipment” for use in school in connection with education provided during school hours, clothing is specifically excluded from the definition of equipment. Parents can therefore be asked to provide their children with such things as PE kit, protective aprons and sports kit.

Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “Optional Extras”

This can include:

- Education provided out of school hours that is not part of the National Curriculum
- Pupil’s travel costs
- Board and lodging (Residential Trips)

In calculating the cost of the optional extra an amount can be included in relation to:

- Materials, books, Instruments and equipment in connection with the optional extra.
- Non-teaching staff costs
- Insurance costs
- The cost of engaging a teacher, who is already employed by the Authority, on a contract for service, as distinct from a contract of employment, specifically for the activity.

Charges for “finished products”

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

Public Examinations

No charge 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 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 LEA 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 in regulations.

Instrumental Music tuition

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 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.

Information on charging and remissions policy

Parents are entitled to information about a school’s charging and remissions policy, and governing body must ensure that this is **available on request** during school hours.