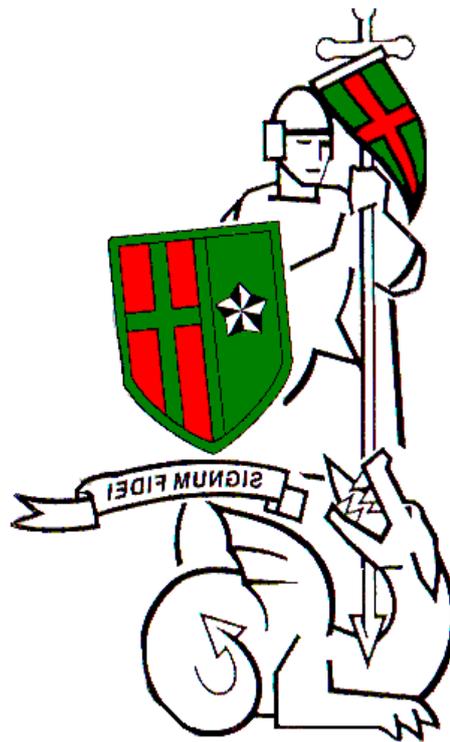


CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

ST. GEORGE'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL



CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Introduction

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities, in schools maintained by local education authorities in England. This policy has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in “A Guide to the Law for School Governors” (Chapter 23). This policy accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but is not a substitute for those terms.

Education

The School may charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child’s parent wishes him/her to own them;
- optional extras (see page 2);
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4).

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 pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s), if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the pupil to school, or to other premises where the local education authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education;
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential trip;
- 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;

- 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 may not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It may not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils 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 trip.

The charge cannot exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra or the board and lodging.

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.

Voluntary Contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions to benefit the school or any school activities. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. Please note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his/her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a trip, then it will be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The school will make it clear to parents at the outset what the policy for allocating places on school trips will be.

Residential Trips

Schools can charge for:

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

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming trip, they will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- 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 does not exceed the current threshold as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs;
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit.

Music Tuition

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

Charges may be made by the school 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 Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

(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.)

Transport

The school may charge for transport as permitted under '**optional extras**'.
See Page 1

Charging Policies

No charges can be made unless the governing body of the school has drawn up a charging policy, giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for.

Remissions Policies

The governing body has a remissions policy, setting out any circumstances in which they propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their Charging Policy.

(for example: The governing body may decide to reduce the cost (wholly or partly) of certain activities for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.)

This will be considered and decided at the time a particular activity is being proposed by the school.

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 the 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.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip, 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

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the trip 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 trip is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

(When implementing this 'Charging & Remissions' policy reference should also be made to the detail contained within the 'Guidance for Charging for School Activities' document – December 2007 and Chapter 23 'Charging for School Activities' – A Guide to the Law for Governors)

Appendix A

Text of letter to parents to be sent when a request for a contribution is made

In accordance with our policy, we invite parents / carers to contribute to the cost of visits or activities organised to enrich the curriculum. No child will be excluded from this activity if his or her parents / carers are unable to make the contribution. However, I am sure you will understand that we cannot afford to pay for it within the funds available to us. If insufficient contributions are received, then this activity may not go ahead. If anyone has difficulty with this, we will be happy to discuss it confidentially.