Charging and Remissions Policy

Amberley Parochial School

Children at the heart of our unique community

BECOMING REFLECTIVE, INDEPENDENT & ASPIRATIONAL LEARNERS FOR LIFE

Approved on: Spring Term One 2020 by the Resources Committee
Date of Review: Spring Term One 2022 by the Resources Committee
Chair of Governors: Dr J Holmes
Other Relevant Polices: Letting, Safer Working Practices

Charging and Remissions Policy

Introduction

The Governors wish to provide for all pupils the best possible educational opportunities available within its resource. The law states very clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents and the Governors warmly endorse that principle and are committed to uphold all legal requirements. It is recognised, however, that many other educationally valuable activities have been and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents. Without that financial support, the school would find it quite impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of the educational programme for pupils that these additional activities can provide.

As a church school we identify Christian Values that underpin the whole school and the wider community. These values inform our school's vision, aims and ethos. The values that relate particularly to this policy are respect, responsibility and trust.

Aims and Objectives

The school's aim is to keep financial contributions from parents to a reasonable minimum and to ensure as far as possible that all children are able to take part in an activity, irrespective of their parents' financial circumstances. The law recognises that charges may be made to parents in certain defined circumstances – provided that the school has identified the activities for which charges will be made and has explained the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain pupils. The Governing Body has decided that until further notice its policy will be as follows:

Prohibition of Charges

The Governing Body recognises that the legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any 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 prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as an essential part of the National Curriculum.
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school;
- education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the schools basic curriculum for religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;
- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip

Schools and Local Authorities can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the child's parent / carer wishes them to own them.
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see Music Tuition below)

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:

- Part of the national Curriculum
- Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or
- 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 Authority/Governing Body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education, and
- 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;
- 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 equally by the number of pupils participating. It must 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 visit.

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

Nothing in legislation prevents a school Governing Body or Local Authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Governing Body or Head Teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The Governing Body or Head Teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents or carers are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent or carer is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents or carers at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents or carers must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents or carers as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. Schools should also ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents or carers when requesting for contributions.

Should a pupil miss a visit due to their own absence where voluntary contributions have been requested from parents then these contributions are to be considered non-refundable except in exceptional circumstances where financial hardship is a genuine concern.

Residential Visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we do not make any charge for the education element. However, parents are obliged to at least pay for the residential expenses of such trips, and we also ask parents to contribute to the full cost of the travel and activity expenses as these are beyond the scope of our main school budget.

A savings scheme will operate to allow parents to spread the cost of such trips over a longer period of time.

Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. There is a charge for individual and group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum.

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Those parents in receipt of one or more of the credits below may be offered assistance in paying for the trip or a longer period of instalments will be made available to enable their child to access the activity.

- 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 £15,575 (Financial Year 2008/09);
• The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
• An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

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 pupils 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 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 two sessions. A "half day" means any period of twelve hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

- Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9.00 pm. on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

- Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9.00 pm. on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

General

1) The Governors of the school will review the Policy annually at the Governor's Autumn Term meeting.

2) A summary of this Charging Policy must be made available on request, and will be reproduced in the School Prospectus.