

LITTLE HEATH SCHOOL

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Purpose and background

The Education Act 1996 (s 449 – 462) sets out the law on charging for school activities in a maintained school. The Act also stipulates that a Governing Body may not levy any charge for optional extras or the board and lodging element of residential trips unless they have both a ‘charging’ policy and a ‘remissions’ policy in place.

The remissions policy must set out the circumstances in which the school proposes to remit (in whole or part) any charge which would otherwise be payable to the school in accordance with the charging policy.

The content of this policy does not in any way relate to the holding of any fund-raising or sponsorship activities, whether they be run directly by the school or by another body such as a PTA.

Policy objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- to ensure that any charges levied on parents or carers by the school are permitted under the provisions of the Education Act 1996
- to set out which activities undertaken by the school can be classed as an optional extra
- to clearly distinguish between what constitutes a charge as opposed to a voluntary contribution
- to ensure that the school’s policy on charging and remissions for optional extras as well as the board and lodging element of residential trips is clear and well publicised to parents and carers

Management of policy

School:	This policy is implemented and managed by the School Business Manager and the Headteacher
Governing Body:	The Governors’ Finance and Resources Committee reviews this policy annually and recommends amendments to the Governing Body for final approval.
Approval:	Approved by the Full Governing Body on 26 January 2021

Next review due: November 2021

Associated policies

Financial Management Policy
Offsite Activities Policy
Lettings Policy

Practice and procedures

Education

No charge will be made for:

- admission to the school
- education provided during school hours (schools hours being as defined below) including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in this policy
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum (for example science fieldwork), or a part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination, or part of religious education. 'Part of the National Curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the national curriculum 'inclusion statement' such as developing teamwork skills.
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or as groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
- entry in to a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school. However if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents.
- examination re-sits if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit at the school. However if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents.

A charge will be made for:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them
- optional extras (see below)

- music and vocal tuition, provided either individually or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition. However, no charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the local authority.
- community facilities e.g. lettings
- examination re-sits at KS5 where the re-sit is at the request of the student so that they can try to improve their grade
- review of marking and access to scripts for KS5 students for 6th form qualifications

The school may make a charge to cover the cost of materials/ingredients for subjects such as Art and Food Technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring the finished product home.

Education/non-residential activities partly during school hours

If 50% or more of the time spent on an 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 of school hours.

Residential visits partly during school hours

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, any education provided on the trip which is provided outside of school hours should be treated as having been provided during school hours, even if some activities take place late in the evening. Irrespective of the timings of the school day at Little Heath, regulations require that the school day is divided in to two sessions. A 'half day' is defined as any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Optional extras

Charges may be made for 'optional extras' which include:

- 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

- part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport, other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the LA or Governing Body have arranged for the pupils to be provided with education
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- extended day services offered to pupils, for example, after school clubs and supervised homework sessions

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

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- the cost of buildings and accommodation
- provision of non-teaching staff in connection with the provision of the optional extra
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. The charge will not therefore include any element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to take part in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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 will 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.

Transport

The school cannot charge for:

- transporting pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting pupils to other premises where the LA or Governing Body has arranged for the pupils to be educated
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit (although voluntary contributions can be requested)

Residential Visits

The school cannot charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours (as defined by s452 of the Education Act 1996 - see above)
- education provided on, or the cost of travel for, any visit 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 religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

The school will charge for:

- board and lodging (the charge will not exceed the actual cost)

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, it must however be made clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the benefits listed below will be exempt (ie receive statutory remission) from paying the cost of the board and lodging if they so wish, if the education on the trip is not able to be charged for. The eligibility criteria for statutory remission has been aligned with the free school meal eligibility criteria.

Financial Support

Parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed below will be advised of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits:

- Universal credit – if you apply on or after 1/4/18 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)
- Income Support (IS)
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- Support under part V1 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 HMRC) does not exceed £16,190
- The guaranteed element of the State Pension Credit
- An income related Employment and Support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008
- Working tax credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Voluntary Contributions

The school is allowed to request voluntary contributions for the general benefit of the school, to help purchase equipment or to fund school activities. This means that even though the school may not be allowed to charge for a particular trip or activity, it can still ask for a voluntary contribution from parents, with a view to covering at least some of the cost.

However if an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this must be made clear to parents at the outset. It will also be made clear that there is no obligation to make any contribution and parents will not be pressured in to doing so. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity or visit, and the school cannot fund the short-fall from some other source, then it must be cancelled. The school will make this clear to parents when publicising the activity.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because his/her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still have an equal chance of taking part in the activity. The school will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

Willful or Negligent Damage to, or Loss of, School Property

The school will seek reimbursement from parents for the cost of rectifying damage to, or loss of, school property caused willfully or negligently by their children.

Communication

A copy of this policy will be kept on the school's website and a hard copy will be made available to parents on request.

Associated documents

Department for Education: Charging for School Activities May 2018

Appendices

Appendix 1: Charging and remissions flow chart