

ALTRINCHAM C.E. AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL CHARGING POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

To work in partnership with parents and the churches, to nurture children in the Christian faith and to provide them with the best possible educational opportunities.

Introduction

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum with the exception of individual or group music tuition. We do however, rely on the good will and financial support of parents who are able to make voluntary donations towards the cost of activities such as swimming, educational visits and residential visits. We would never want a child to miss any activity because they were unable to make a contribution. The Head teacher urges parents to approach him in complete confidence if assistance is sought.

Voluntary contributions

No child will be denied the opportunity to take part in such visits simply because his/her parents are unable or unwilling to make such a contribution. However, if insufficient contributions are promised,

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, A voluntary contribution will be requested in advance of a visit. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions then the visit may not take place.

If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre;
- musical events.

Residential visits

From time to time the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly in school time to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, sporting or social and team building activities. Parents are invited to contribute towards the cost of this activity on a similar basis to other activities.

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 or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. The peripatetic music teachers teach individual or small group lessons. We make a charge for these lessons.

Parents in receipt of state benefits are exempt from payment. We give parents information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year.

Swimming

The school organises swimming lessons for all children in Year 3. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. Parents are invited to contribute towards the cost of this activity on a similar basis to other activities. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons.

Football

The school offers additional football and other sports coaching after school. A teacher, who is a member of the school staff, or an experienced coach (with CRB approval), who may not be a member of staff, may run and organize these sessions. We make no charge for these sessions. On occasions activities advertised within school, but provided by external agencies, may make a charge for their services.

Extra Curricular Activities

These are provided free of charge and take place due to the goodwill of the teachers concerned. Other clubs are on offer during the year from outside agencies at a small fixed cost.

Breakages, Losses and Damage

Charges will be made for these if they are the result of the child's carelessness or bad behaviour.

This policy is subject to revision at any time by the Governing Body.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/ INCLUSION

The School Mission Statement requires the School to examine the values transmitted, either intentionally or unintentionally, to pupils and to ensure that the curriculum, organisation, ethos and attitudes provide all pupils with equal opportunity for educational achievement. The Governing Body will therefore seek to ensure that all pupils in the School have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum and that the specific needs of pupils are met to ensure equality of access.

The practices and procedures followed are as outlined in the school policies on Equal Opportunities and School Inclusion. This includes planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs (SEN), children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups including, and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The school strives to provide a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, in which children's contributions are valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged.

Date agreed by staff.....

Date approved by Governing Body.....

Head teacher's signature.....

Chairman's signature.....

Charging Policy - notes

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 guidance 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 guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but is not a substitute for those terms.

Education

Schools cannot charge for:

- 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 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;

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.

Schools can charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras
- 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.

- 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

Nothing in legislation prevents a school from asking 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 should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher should also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. It is also important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a trip, then it must be cancelled.

If a parent 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 at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school trips will be.

Residential Trips

Schools cannot charge for:

- 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 religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip.

Can charge for:

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

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming trip, they should 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 (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.

Music Tuition

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

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. Charges may only be made 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).

Transport

Schools cannot charge for:

- 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 that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school;
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

Can charge for:

- any other transport. This is a permitted optional extra.

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 that they intend to charge for.

Remissions Policies

If the parent/guardian of a pupil is in receipt of income support, income based jobseekers' allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or Child tax credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £13,230), charges in respect of board and lodging will be remitted in full.

The Headteacher, Finance Committee or Governing Body may remit in full or part charges in respect of a pupil, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

The Headteacher, Finance Committee or Governing Body may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

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.

Voluntary Contributions

Where the school cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to make these additional activities within the resources ordinarily available to the school, the school may request or invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the trip. Pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request or invitation. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, then it will be cancelled.

Lettings

The school will make its facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined annually by the Finance Committee.

Other charges

The Headteacher, Finance Committee or Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

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.

