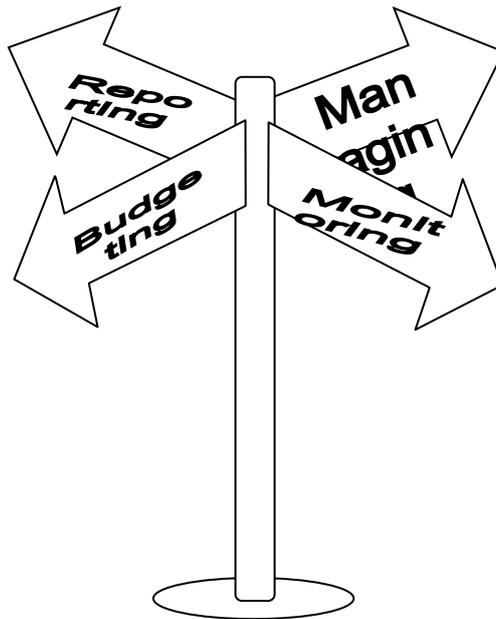




SOMERSET
County Council

Financial Guidance

SCHOOL CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY



Produced by Schools Funding and Accountancy Team (SFAT)
Finance and Performance.

Updated **April 2019**

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INTRODUCTION

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities and school visits. The policy must be made available to parents and must be kept under regular review.

The purpose of this guidance book is to help governing bodies, school leaders and school staff to set out their policies on charging and remission for school activities and school visits.

Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

Full details can be found on [Gov.uk – Charging for school activities](#)

Charging and Remission Policies

Schools should ensure that they have a Charging and Remissions Policy available on their websites. The policy must include details of:

- The activities or cases where your school will charge pupils' parents
- The circumstances where your school will make an exception on a payment you would normally expect to receive under your charging policy.

Schools may not charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment) subject to the exceptions referred to in this guidance.

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

The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the local authority's as long as it meets the requirements of the law. A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.

Schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost or if they qualify to receive it free. See [Residential Visits](#).

The remissions policy must set out any circumstances in which the school propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging policy.

The cost of remissions must be borne by the school from their formula funding, pupil premium, contingency funds or fundraising. There is no return to be completed to re-claim the money back.

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School Charging

Education

School governing bodies and local authorities **cannot** charge for:

- An admission application to any state funded school
- 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, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition for pupils learning individually or in groups unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupils parent
- Entry for a prescribed public exam
- Exam re-sits if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit at school.

Schools and local authorities **can** charge 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 in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

Music Tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or in groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupils' parent. Charges must not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of staff that provided the tuition.

Charges should not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum or provided under the first access to KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. No charge should also be made if a pupil is being looked after by the local authority.

Transport

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from school premises where the education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority have arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an exam requirement where they have been prepared for that exam at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

Guidance on school travel can be found on [Gov.UK-Home to school travel and transport guidance](#)

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Examinations

No charge can be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are on the National Curriculum. However, an examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the pupil wasn't prepared for the examination at the school
- the examination isn't on the National Curriculum, 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 local authority (LA) originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee

Residential Visits

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside of schools hours if part of the national curriculum
- Supply Teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

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

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, 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:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (provided they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £16,190.
- Guaranteed State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Since April 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria.

Further guidance on learning outside the classroom can be found [here](#).

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Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside of school hours a charge can only be made for the activity outside of school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum.

If 50% or more of the time spent occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel occurs in 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.

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.

Residential Activities

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. 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

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

Example 2

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 visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

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Community Facilities

Schools are allowed to provide facilities that can be used by the local community for example out of hours/holiday childcare or swimming pool sessions. These facilities further any charitable purpose for the benefit of pupils at the school or their families or people who live and work in the locality in which the school is situated. Schools can charge for the use of these facilities and a profit can also be generated, providing it is spent on the purposes of the school and or community facilities.

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 syllabus for a prescribed public examination where pupil is prepared for by the school, part of religious education.
- exam entry fee if the pupil hasn't been prepared for the exam at the school
- transport where is not regularly required to transport the pupil to school or other premises where education is provided.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- extended school services such as breakfast club and after school club

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

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

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. Where a small portion 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.

Participation in any optional extra activity is on parental choice and willingness to meet the charges. Therefore parental agreement is a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

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Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body 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 school should make this clear to the parents from the outset. **The governing body must also make it clear that there is no obligation to make a contribution.**

It is important that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. **If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit or the school cannot fund it from another source then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents.**

Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments. Direct debit or standing order mandates should **not** be sent to parents requesting contributions. Parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory.

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Langford Budville CofE Primary School

Charging and Remissions Policy



Review date	Agreed by Governors	Next Review
April 2019	June 2019	April 2021

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges may be made for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL VISITS

We may charge for the cost of board and lodgings during overnight school trips, but the charge will not be more than the accommodation actually costs. Parents who are in receipt of certain benefits will not be required to pay. Parents should contact the school for further information.

MUSIC TUITION

Charges may be made when the tuition is not an essential part of

- the National Curriculum
- a public examination syllabus
- first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition, Wider Opportunities programme

EXAMINATIONS

No charge will be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are on the National Curriculum. However, an examination entry fee may be charged to parents if

- the pupil wasn't prepared for the examination at the school
- the examination isn't on the National Curriculum, 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 local authority (LA) originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee

We may charge for

- re-sits for public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school
- costs of non-prescribed examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school

BREAKAGES AND REPLACEMENTS

We may charge for breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by pupils

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL CLUBS

We may charge for extra-curricular activities and school clubs.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

We may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of

- any activity which takes place during school hours
- school equipment

The contribution is voluntary and pupils of parents who can't, or don't want to, contribute will not be excluded from the activity. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there are no other ways to get funds, we may cancel the activity.

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