

A POLICY FOR CHARGING AND REMSSIONS FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Rationale

Alderley Edge Primary School needs a policy in order to respond to the Education Act 1996. The Education Act of 1996 gives LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours. The Act also confirms the right of LAs and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school whether during or outside school hours.

Purpose

This policy will state the conditions under which the school may charge for some activities, and should eradicate any uncertainties with regard to charging pupils. This policy meets the objectives of the charging provisions of the Education Act (1996) which are...

- To maintain the right to free school education;
- To establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time should be available to all young people regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost;
- To emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give LA's and schools and other establishments the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours;
- To confirm the right of LA's and schools or other establishments to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school/establishment, or in support of any activity organised by the school/establishment whether during or outside school hours.

Guidelines

A set of guidelines has been drawn up as follows:

1. Neither children or parents will be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours. Parents may be invited to provide their children voluntarily with particular items, but no child should be at a disadvantage because of a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute in this way.
2. The school should provide, or pay for, any ingredients for cooking purposes (food technology) and any materials, equipment etc for practical subjects. Parents who are willing to contribute in cash or in kind can, however, be encouraged to do so on a voluntary basis.
3. This policy is supported by the LA policy for charging which in accordance with the legislation states we can charge parents for any or all of those activities for which charges are permitted. They are as following:

- Board and lodgings on residential visits, subject to the remission as a minimum, of board and lodgings charges for young people on trips, deemed to fall in school time, for young people whose parents receive Income Support, Working Families' Tax Credit, Disability Working Allowance or an income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
 - Activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours (as defined in the legislation), and which are not provided as part of the syllabus for prescribed public examination and are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education;
4. Following the Cheshire policy, school should remit charges for visits deemed to take place wholly or mainly during school hours to Cheshire's own outdoor education and residential centres for pupils attending Cheshire schools whose parents receive Income Support, Working Families' Tax Credit, Disability Working Allowance or an income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
 5. School should seek voluntary contributions, in order to fund activities taking place wholly or mainly during school hours for which the costs cannot be met from the school's budget, provided that it is made clear to parents, in writing, that any contribution is voluntary and failure to contribute will not involve the relevant parent's child being treated differently from any other young people in the school.
 6. Music teaching in our school is free and we provide children with the opportunity to learn to play the recorder in Year 3. Additional peripatetic music tuition in school time is available but is chargeable as it beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum. Parental agreement must be obtained before a pupil is given tuition that requires payment. The charge can include the cost of the teacher giving the tuition, as well as the cost of the music and the hire/insurance of a musical instrument.
 7. Individual, or group vocal tuition, provided in school hours, must be free. Where vocal tuition is provided outside school hours, and is not required as an integral part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination, or by the National Curriculum, a charge may be made.
 8. Voluntary contributions for trips and visits, must be genuinely voluntary. The terms for any request for contributions must make it clear:
 - that there is no obligation to contribute
 - that pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.
 9. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, it must be made clear to the parents at the outset. An initial letter should explain the nature of the proposed activity and its likely value in educational terms, it should also indicate the

contribution per pupil and emphasise that there is no obligation to contribute and that no pupil will be omitted from the activity if his or her parents were unwilling or unable to contribute. It should be made equally clear that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it.

10. School residential visits include costs that may not be automatically visible to the parent/guardian such as the additional staffing costs associated with providing the necessary, enhanced supervision for such visits. School may have to employ additional suitably qualified staff to attend the visit or release other staff in school. The school may apply a nominal 5% supplement to the visit to assist with the payment of these additional costs.
11. If a pupil breaks a window, defaces school property or damages equipment, parents may be asked to pay for the cost of replacement where this is a deliberate result of the pupil's behaviour.

Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, Alderley Edge Community Primary has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances.

Further information regarding individual personal circumstances where charges can or may be waived can be located on the HMRC website e.g. Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment & support Allowance, Child Tax Credit etc. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/in-work-or-looking-for-work/working-taxcredit-overview/>

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances:

- specific individual circumstances that have caused temporary hardship
- recently moved into hardship but not yet receiving the benefits mentioned above
- made a specific request to the Headteacher for any other justifiable reason.

The remission is at the Headteacher's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided.

Conclusion

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Education Act 1996 so that all stakeholders are clear about charging for school activities.

Review Cycle – Annually

Next review – September 2025