

Lower Farm School Policy On Charging And Remissions

The Governors endorse the authorities view that it is the right that every pupil should be entitled to receive free school education.

They recognise that the Education Reform Act gives the schools the discretion to charge for optional extras provided wholly or mainly outside school hours and to invite voluntary contributions in support of any activity organised by the school whether during or outside school hours.

The Governors however wish to make it clear that whenever activities are organised the school will always take particular account of pupils whose families are suffering financial hardship.

The Governors wish to make it clear that they expect that visits which are deemed to take place mainly or wholly in school hours will be part of a child's education and will conform to the school's curriculum aims.

Optional Extras

Some activities may be provided as optional extras. These are activities that fall outside the school day and are not required by either the National Curriculum or a public examination. Participation in optional extras will be basis of parental choice and prior confirmation in writing is required from the parents that they are willing to pay the charges.

However, a charge may not exceed the actual cost of the provision. This does not apply to voluntary contributions.

Board and Lodging

A charge may be made for board and lodging in connection with residential activities. The charge cannot exceed the actual cost of providing board and lodging, and prior written confirmation from the parent is required that she/he is willing to pay the charge.

Where a residential activity is deemed to take place in school hours, or to take place outside school hours, but is part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination, or is required by the National Curriculum, no charge for board and lodging can be made in respect of pupils whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Family Credit. Where such activities are organised by the school the school shall bear the cost of board and lodging for these pupils.

Voluntary Contributions

Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution that covers the cost of any visit in or out of school hours. However, if the visit is in school time, the pupil has the entitlement to take part in the visit, irrespective of any payment.

If the amount of voluntary contributions falls below target the school then has to determine whether the visit is financially viable and whether it should go ahead. Any shortfall in voluntary contributions may be made up from school fund/ contributions from other families/ or a combination of each.

Visits Arranged by a Third Party

Any visit arranged by a third party can be fully charged whatever time the visit is made. Monies should be paid directly to the organisation and leave of absence would be required if the activity takes place in school time.

Breakages and Losses

Parents may be asked to pay for the cost of broken windows or damaged or lost books etc. only where this is the result of pupils' behaviour.

Practical Subjects

Where parents have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, the school may make a charge. The charge may not exceed the cost of materials used by the pupil.

Tuition in the Playing of Musical Instruments

While group tuition remains free, the school may make a charge for musical tuition in groups of up to four, whether inside or outside school hours. The charge may include the cost of the teacher (based on a pro-rata calculation of his/her salary) and, where appropriate, the cost of sheet music and hire and insurance of the instrument. The charge would be forwarded to the authority.

This policy is in line with the Authority policy on Charging and Remission as described in the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Education Committee document Local Management of Schools, and should be used in conjunction with it.