

South Hylton Primary School



Charging and Remissions Guidelines and Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body

Date: _____

Signed: _____

SOUTH HYLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL – CHARGING POLICY

Introduction

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities. This Charging and Remissions Policy describes how the Headteacher and Governors of South Hylton Primary School will do their best to ensure a good range of activities and visits are offered to children whilst minimising the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- Charges will be not be made
- Charges will be made and how they are calculated
- Charges may be waived
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South Hylton Primary School: Charging and Remissions Policy

This policy is divided into two key parts:

1. The Legal Situation: what schools are legally allowed to charge for
2. Our own Charging Policy: How this impacts on our School Policy and Practice

1. The Legal Situation

School Governing Bodies and Local Authorities cannot charge for:

- An admission application to any state funded school – paragraph 1.9(n) of the ‘Schools Admissions Code 2012’ rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
- 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. ‘Part of the National Curriculum’ is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based e.g. (Geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum ‘inclusion statement’ (e.g. developing teamwork skills)

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- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at school and;
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit by the school

Schools governing bodies 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 (see page 4).
- Certain early years provision (The Education (Charges for Early Years Provision) regulations 2012
- Community facilities (education Act 2002)

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:**
 1. part of the National Curriculum
 2. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 3. 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 local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

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.

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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 will make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. 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.
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Can charge for:

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

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 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).

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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.

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.

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.

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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.

2. Charging Policy: South Hylton Primary School

Charging for School Equipment

South Hylton Primary School will not charge for materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in education during school hours. The only exceptions to this will be:

- Where wilful damage to the equipment by the child has taken place:
- Where books or equipment have been mislaid or lost whilst at home. Parents may be asked either to replace the equipment/books or part the cost/contribution towards the cost of replacement.

Musical Tuition

South Hylton Primary School is in the enviable position of being able to offer a good number of musical tuition to whole classes in KS1 and 2 free of charge. Children are provided with instruments for these lessons.

Currently, the only cost implication for musical tuition is replacement reeds for woodwind instruments which can be purchased from school at the cost of £1.

Once again, careless or wilful damage to an instrument **may** be charged to parents, up to the value of a new instrument.

Visits During School Hours

A voluntary contribution will be requested from parents to pay for transport and admission costs.

The costs of trips will be the total cost of transport and any entry/participation charges divided equally by the number of children attending.

Parents will be made aware before each visit that should enough contributions to make the trip viable not be forthcoming, then the trip may have to be cancelled.

Charges for parents unable to, or unwilling to pay, will not be passed on in any way to other parents. If funding becomes available to pay for any part of this trip i.e. from a charitable funding, then parents will be given this information as a percentage of the total cost to them.

However, as part of our commitment to providing children with real life learning experiences, South Hylton Primary School will endeavour to subsidise any visits as heavily as possible, leaving parents, at times, with a nominal payment.

Residential Educational Trips

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To stage such visits, we will be totally dependent on parental support. The law now states that we can charge for accommodation, (hotel/youth hostels, etc.) including meals, but cannot insist on any payment to cover transport/entry fees etc. for any activities taking place within **normal school hours**.

On occasions when we organise such visits, full details of actual costs and how much the amount we need as voluntary payments to cover transport etc. will be made available to parents. Regretfully, insufficient support overall will result in the visit not going ahead.

Visits which take place outside of the normal school hours can be charged for at the full cost of accommodation and transport as long as the visits are not deemed to be part of the curriculum.

In such cases, full costs will be passed onto parents unless, as previously, funding is made available.

Again, South Hylton Primary School has prioritised Residential Visits for heavy subsidy so that as many children as possible can participate in these valuable learning experiences.

Deposits

When it is necessary to charge a non-returnable deposit, often in respect of residential visits, such deposits are not refundable unless the school is able to re-sell the place or reclaim the deposit from the provider or travel insurance. In such cases, loss of excess is born by the parent/guardian.

Absence from Visits

Parents may reclaim the cost, except for any non-returnable deposit, or any charge/voluntary contribution of a visit or activity if their child is absent at the time of the activity/visit due to ill health. In such cases confirmation of illness, through a note from the family doctor is necessary.

Please note, children removed from visits because of behavioural issues will not be entitled to a refund once that visit has commenced. On residential visits, the dead line for payment is usually 6-8 weeks before the visit and payments then become non-refundable. Any payments made before this cut off point will not be refunded if there is a serious behavioural issue which prevents a child from attending a visit. On any other visits every attempt will be made by the school to return entry fees. However transport payments will not normally be refunded.

Accompanying Adults

Many educational visits offer free places to accompanying adults. However, if a charge is made for adults this may be factored into the cost per child as, on many trips, we have to adhere to guidelines on pupil:adult ratios.

After School/Extra Curricular Activities

South Hylton Primary School endeavours to offer a range of activities to children after school. Whilst most of activities are run through the goodwill of staff and incur no charges to children, from time to time charges may have to be passed over to parents. This may be when:

- Coaches are employed at additional costs to the school
- A club uses a high level of consumable material, for example in cookery or art clubs.
- Where extra staffing needs to be deployed/employed to cover the cost of the club i.e. Street Dance, Breakfast Club.

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Remissions Policy

Parents who are in receipt of the following payments may be considered by the governing body for support in the payment of **charges** for board and lodging on residential visits:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit.

Requests, which should be submitted to the governing body or headteacher, will be treated with confidentiality and sympathy.

If the governing body is unable to assist or authorise payment, then charges will once again become the responsibility of the parent.

Participation will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

Please note, no visits or activities will include any element of subsidy within the cost per child for any other pupil wishing to participate whose parents are unwilling or unable to meet the full charge.

Where contributions are not sufficient to make a trip or activity unviable financially, then unfortunately this will have to be cancelled.

When a parent is unable to meet a charge for a trip and is unable to secure funding through the governing body, then the place will be offered to another pupil.

Poverty Proofing' The Curriculum

At South Hylton Primary School we are sensitive to the fact that many of our parents/carers are from varying financial situations and backgrounds. In order to 'poverty proof' our curriculum and ensure that all children are given the same opportunity to take part in valuable learning experiences we ensure the following conditions are met:

- All children, irrelevant of status, are offered at least one free visit per term funded by the school
- Additional visits are offered on a voluntary contribution basis only and no child is withdrawn from a visit because of non-payment
- Pupil Premium children are entitled to free educational trips and visits
- Residential visits are heavily subsidised by school irrelevant of status
- Parents, regardless of status, are encouraged to contact the office or Headteacher if for any reason they are unable to meet the cost of a visit.

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