Charging Policy 2026-2027

The purpose of this guide is to set out the policy on charging for various school activities.
There are four principles underlying the provisions on charging:

- That education in schools should be free.
- That activities offered wholly or mainly during normal school teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- That there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education, but that LAs and schools have the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- That LAs and schools have the right 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.

The LA recognises that there are several activities which will only take place if parental contributions are available, but it stresses that no child should be excluded from any activity organised by the school because of the liability or unwillingness of their parents to pay such a contribution.

2. Optional visits wholly or mainly outside school hours.

It is the intention of the LA to charge the full cost of visits which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and not required in order to fulfill statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education. The cost could include travel, insurance, admission charges, meals and, if desired, a sum

of money to enable some pupils to go on the visit without payment, or to cover teachers' travel costs, where a separate contract is issued.

Money can be set aside to cover the cost for those parents who wish their child to go on the visit but who are unable or unwilling to pay. These monies may be from the school's funds, i.e., for educational activities, the subsidy may come from the delegated budget; for social activities, the subsidy may come from private funds (these can also be used for educational activities).

3. Visits wholly or mainly during school hours.

It is the intention of the LA to invite voluntary contributions toward the cost of visits which take place wholly or mainly during school hours and which may, or may not, be provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and may, or may not, be required in order to fulfill statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education. The cost could include travel, insurance, admission charges and, if desired, a sum of

money to enable some pupils to go on the visit without payment or to cover teachers' travel costs.

4. Board and lodging charges on residential visits.

It is the intention of the LA to charge the full cost of board and lodging on visits taking place wholly or mainly during school hours, or if out of school hours, provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education.

Where the parents are in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance (income based), child tax credit (but only when the recipient does not also receive working tax credit and has an annual income of less than £16,000), support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, guarantee element of State Pension Credit or disability working allowance, the board and

lodging charges may be remitted, and this cost will have to be met from within the school's funds, i.e., for educational activities, the subsidy may come from the delegated budget; for social activities, the subsidy may come from private funds (these can also be used for educational activities).

The costs of transport, insurance, admission charges, etc., incurred during residential trips may not, however, be charged, although voluntary contributions may, of course, be requested and could become a necessary prerequisite for the visit taking place.

The effect of the restriction on charging and of the fact that a child may not be prevented from going on a visit during school hours if the parents are unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution to expenses other than for board and lodging may lead to certain visits becoming unviable unless the governors set aside monies to cover the deficit.

5. Individual tuition in the playing of a musical instrument.

It is not the intention of the LA to charge for such tuition where it is provided by LA employed schools' staff, whether in or out of school hours. However, where tuition or ensemble activities are provided by external agencies and peripatetic teachers a charge may be made to pupils concerned.

6. Charges for ingredients, materials and equipment.

Schools must be prepared to provide any ingredients, materials, equipment needed for the delivery of the curriculum. Parents who are willing to contribute in cash, or in kind, will be encouraged to do so on a voluntary basis. The school may charge for, or invite parents to supply, ingredients, materials and equipment if parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

7. Charges for breakages and fines.

Parents may be asked to pay for loss or damage to equipment or

property caused by their child.

- 8. **Recovery of unpaid charges.**

Sums payable by parents for wasted examination fees, for optional extras to which they had agreed, or for board and lodging, are recoverable as civil debts. The cost of providing for pupils who choose not to go on a visit which takes place partly during school time must be met by the school or be included in the voluntary payment by parents of children participating in the visit, and may be included as part of a charge for board and lodging.

Summary of main points.

- Optional trips wholly or mainly (as defined in the Circular) outside school hours will be charged at full cost.
- Trips wholly or mainly (as defined in the Circular) during school hours may be funded by voluntary contributions. NO child may be excluded from such a trip because the parents are unable or unwilling to pay a voluntary contribution.
- Board and lodging costs on residential trips will be charged except to those parents in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance (income based), child tax credit (but only when the recipient does not also receive working tax credit and has an annual income of less than £16,000), support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, guarantee element of State Pension Credit or disability working allowance.
- Individual tuition in the playing of a musical instrument by a

teacher employed by the LA, in or out of school hours, will not be charged for. However, where tuition or ensemble activities are provided by external

agencies and peripatetic teachers a charge may be made to pupils concerned.

- Schools may invite voluntary contributions towards the cost of ingredients, materials and equipment where parents have expressed the wish in advance to have the finished product.
- Schools may make charges for loss, breakages and damage to property.
- Governors may make provision through voluntary contributions for costs incurred by the children or parents who are unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

Definitions

The most important definition concerns whether an activity takes place within or out of school hours.

- If the number of school sessions missed by the pupils is less than 50% of the number of half days taken up by the activity, the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours. If the number of school sessions is 50% or more of the number of half days, the activity is deemed to take place during school hours.

Numbers of half days, or of school sessions, are to be rounded up as follows: Where 6 or more hours in a half day is spent on a residential visit

the whole of that half day counts as having been spent on the visit; where half or more of a school session is devoted to a residential visit the entire session counts as having been spent on the visit.