



IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

Policy Document



The Cornerstones of our
Learning Community

Headteacher: Mr Martin Brown

Policy Name:

Charging for School Activities

Date:

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SUMMARY

This document explains the legislation governing the charging for school activities as set out in the Education Act 1996: Sections 449-462. It covers what a governing body may and may not charge for when activities take place either during or outside of school hours, including residential activities. The need to have charging and remissions policies and requests for voluntary contributions is also addressed.

EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Education provided during school hours must be free. No charge can be made for:

- Admitting students to maintained schools
- Education provided during school hours including materials, books, equipment and instruments
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school
- Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the national curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the student is being prepared at the school, or part of religious education.

Charges may be made for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where parents wish their child to own them
- Optional extras (see later detail)
- Music and vocal tuition in limited circumstances
- Community facilities.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES/TRIPS

Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no compulsory charge may be made. The school may however ask for voluntary contributions without which the activity or trip may not run.

EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or do not form part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education. In addition, no charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination.

Compulsory charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 describes activities that can be charged for as "optional extras". It is up to the governing body to decide whether to make a charge, but any charge must not exceed the actual cost per individual child for whom charges are being made.

Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the National Curriculum
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared at the school
 - c) part of religious education
- Examination entry fees if the student has not been prepared for the examination at the school
- Transport that is not required to take the student to school or to other premises where arrangements have been made for the student to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to students

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

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- Non-teaching staff
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra. This includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- The cost or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES/STUDENTS IN MEETING POSSIBLE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PLANNED ACTIVITIES/TRIPS

Parents/Carers in receipt of benefits or support (as detailed below) are offered assistance by the school in meeting any costs associated with activities/trips. The school has dedicated funding to meet the needs of students in receipt of free school meals or those that have, until recently, received free school meals.

All correspondence relating to activities/trips, which may have costs associated with them, carry details about what support the school can offer. Parents/Carers are encouraged to contact the school about such support. In the first instance this will usually be directly to the member of staff organising the activity/trip or the school bursar. All such requests are treated in confidence.

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students. Students in receipt of free school meals will receive extra support to ensure they do not miss out on opportunities.

The new criteria to be eligible for free school meals require that parents and carers are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TUITION

There is an exception to the rule about not charging for activities in school hours. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to specify circumstances where charges can be made for music tuition. The new regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide students with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual student or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound teaching principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing, provided that the request is made by the student's parent. 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 student(s).

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

No charges may be made for entering students for public examinations that are set out in Regulations. The governing body must enter a student for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the school has prepared the student. This does not apply if the governing body thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or if the student's parents request in writing that the student should not be entered. The Local Authority may not override the governing body's decision on whether to enter a particular student for an examination.

An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the student was not prepared for it at the school
- the examination is not on the set list, but the school arranges for the student to take it
- a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Charges may not be made for any cost associated with preparing a student for an examination. However, charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a student is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in Regulations. Charging may be made for students undertaking re-sits of an examination.

ACTIVITIES NOT RUN BY THE SCHOOL OR LA

When an organisation acting independently of a school or LA arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents want their children to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents. However, where an activity is organised by a third party and is approved by the school, is educational, or is supervised by someone authorised by the school, then it is the DFE's view that it should be treated as if it were provided by the school and no charge should be made to the parents or students. Such an activity, if it takes place outside the school premises, is an "approved educational activity".

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Although schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. Governing bodies should also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents this should be explained to them at the planning stage.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible and there is no way to make up the shortfall, the activity must be cancelled. The essential point is that no student may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot, or will not, make a contribution of any kind. The school must first decide which class, or group of pupils, will benefit from the activity and then look for voluntary contributions, or by general fundraising. Governors would be free to use the school budget share to meet the cost of such activities.

CHARGING POLICIES

If a charge is made it must not exceed the actual cost for each student. If further funds are required, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions, general fundraising, or from the school budget share.

The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity.

SCHOOL MINIBUSES

Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running a school minibus, including loss of value. But the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit-making activity, even if any profit would go into the school's other running costs or for charitable purposes.

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND BREAKAGES

Where school property has been wilfully damaged the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement. Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a student, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher and each case will be considered individually.