

Robin Hood Primary School Charges for School Activities Policy

This policy has been written, following guidance from the DfE and the National Association of Headteachers. Sections 449-462 (of the Education Act 1996) sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Academies (including free schools, studio schools and university technology colleges) are also required through their funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

Charges which cannot be imposed

School governing bodies and local authorities, subject to the limited exceptions detailed in this advice, cannot charge for education provided during school hours.

This includes the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment.

School governing bodies and local authorities, **cannot** charge for:

- an admission application to any state funded school (paragraph 1.9(n) of the school 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;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition provided is at the request of the pupil's parent; and
- entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.

Schools **must** inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed in the document of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits. No child should be excluded from an activity simply because the parent cannot afford to pay, or is unwilling to pay.

Chargeable Activities in School

The DfE states that Schools 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 below);
- certain early years provision; and
- community facilities.

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as '**optional extras**' where an optional extra is being provided and in full agreement with the parent. In this case, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment.

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 that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or

c) 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; and
- extended day services for pupils (breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework).

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;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide optional extra; and
- the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the 'optional extra' activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must 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 for the full charge.

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. This means that no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip.

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.

Activities for which a voluntary contribution can be requested:

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or for any school activities. But if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents **that there is no obligation** to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other sources, then it **must be** cancelled. Schools should ensure that they make this clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.



When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payment and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

- Educational trips which add value to pupils education and which take place within school hours, where the child's participation has been agreed in advance by the parents. The charge will include the cost of travel, entrance fees, insurance, books, equipment and any staff (teaching or non-teaching) engaged specifically for the activity.
- Paid for activities that take place in school which add value to pupil's education that cannot be funded from the school's curriculum budget eg: planetarium visit to school.
- Travel: the cost of travel when a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the authority or school.

Activities for which a voluntary contribution has been requested may be cancelled if there is a substantial shortfall between the contributions raised and the cost of the activity itself.

Activities outside school hours

- Residential trips that include board and lodging: board and lodging will be charged in all cases where a school activity involves pupils in nights away from home.

Parents who have difficulty meeting any charges should discuss the matter in confidence with the headteacher.

Date Agreed	Written By	Review date
January 2015 October 2016	Sara Harris	October 2018
Signed (Headteacher)		
Chair of Governors)		