

Forest Academy



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Charging and Remissions Policy

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Completed by C. Marano

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Introduction

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items which the school will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge. In general, no charge can be made where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours that are part of the national curriculum. It is therefore not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or for visits to museums during school hours. The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, educational visits and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and sociable events. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities

Charges and contributions:

Voluntary contributions

The Head teaches or Governing Body may ask parents / carers for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours
- school equipment
- school funds generally

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary though and the pupils of the parents / carers who are unable or unwilling to contribute may not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it must be cancelled. There is no legal reason why the school should not invite parents/ carers to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of providing activities within and outside school hours

Residential trips

The School is permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision. Where the trip takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, pupils whose parents / carers are in receipt of the following support benefits will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of these charges:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit provided the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed the national current limit.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

School trips

A similar entitlement applies where the trip takes place outside of school hours but it is a necessary part of the National Curriculum. If the trip takes place outside school hours and does not form part of the above, the school can make a charge for transport.

Instrumental Music tuition

A charge may be made for instrumental music tuition, unless the tuition forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed examination, that the school is preparing the child to sit, or is part of the National Curriculum or the syllabus for religious education, in which case a charge is not permissible. In cases of hardship the governors will consider in their absolute discretion the remission of fees (either in full or in part) for those pupils who they consider will benefit from such tuition.

Charges for "finished products"

Schools can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as art, DT including food technology.

Optional extras

This kind of activity can be charged for where the activity takes place outside school hours. This can include:

- Pupils' travel costs.
- Board and lodging
- Materials, books and other equipment
- Non-teaching staff costs
- Entrance fees to museums, theatres etc.
- Insurance costs

Special events and activities

Sometimes, the school invites special visitors such as theatrical performances into school. We will ask parents to make a monetary donation towards these costs. This is not a compulsory payment however it is increasingly difficult to provide enriching experiences without parental contributions.

Clothing

Although no charge can be made for “equipment” for use in school in connection with education provided during school hours, clothing is specifically excluded from the definition of equipment. Parents / carers are therefore asked to provide their children with such things as PE kit.

Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising. Parents / carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents / carers.

General

(i) The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

(ii) Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Governing Body from inviting parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing education for pupils.

Remissions

Where the parent of a pupil is in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment & Support Allowance (income related)
- Child Tax Credit (without working Tax Credit) & an annual income below £16,190
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
- *28 Day Working Tax Credit

* Evidence needs to be sent of benefit with application

The Governing Body can remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that is organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within the school hours. In other circumstances, there may be cases of family hardship which makes it difficult for pupils in particular activities for which a charge is made. The school knows which children are entitled to FSM and parents will be asked to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Head Teachers in consultation with the Chair of Governors.