

Charging and Remissions Policy

Date: May 2023

Approved by: Resources Committee

Review Period: Annually

Next review due: Summer 2024



Introduction

This policy has been formulated in accordance with statutory legislation and the Local Authority's (LA's) guidance on charging for school activities. Springhallow School has drawn up this policy document to provide guidance regarding charges for school activities.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body at Springhallow School is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Headteacher for the implementation of the policy. Any determinations with respect to individual parents will be considered jointly by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

Principles

The 1996 Education Act sets out the rules and regulations that schools must follow regarding Charges for School Activities, as detailed in sections 449 to 462. The school recognises that no charge can be made for education during school hours. The definition of 'education' includes materials, equipment and transport provided by the LA or school to carry pupils between the school and the activity.

Voluntary Contributions

Section 457 of the Education Act establishes that the restrictions on charging for school activities do not in any way prohibit or restrict a school from seeking voluntary contributions. This may be for the benefit of the school in support of any school activity whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential. The Headteacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

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

Such contributions must however be genuinely voluntary and the parents of pupils who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. The terms of any request for contributions must make it clear that:

- there is no obligation to pay;
- pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made contributions in response to a request.

If a particular activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Governing Body or Headteacher will make it clear to parents at the outset. 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.

Essential Curricular Activities

These activities will be associated with the delivery of the curriculum as set out in the relevant school plans and policies. This would include the cost of the use of mini bus in educational outings, travel by public transport, or entrance costs where relevant.

Contributions may be requested, but pupils of those parents who cannot or refuse to pay will be subsidised for the school to be able to maintain the curriculum offer.

Non-essential Curricular Activities

Very few activities would fall into this category, as all activities in school time should be related to a curriculum activity. However, this may include activities such as the costs associated with individual or small group tuition in the playing of a musical instrument.

Where activities are deemed to be non-essential curricular activities, parents will be asked to pay the total cost of these activities.

Extended Educational Visits and Residential Trips

The school is permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips. However, this cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision. Where the trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, children whose parents are in receipt of benefits such as Income Support or Working Tax Credit, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, will be entitled to the remission of these charges.

Refunds

The school will always do its utmost to obtain a refund from suppliers but cannot be held liable if no refunds are available.

Optional and Extended School Activities

These activities include extended school activities and leisure activities, e.g. after-school clubs or theatre trips. Parents will be asked to pay the full cost of these activities otherwise their children will not be able to take part in the activity.

Public Examinations

No charges will be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in regulations. However, an examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list, but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
- a pupil 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 pupil for an examination. However, charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in regulations.

Damage / Loss to Property

In the case of willful or malicious damage to equipment, or loss of school books on loan to children, the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body may decide it appropriate to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

Lettings

The school may make its facilities available to outside users, providing a facility for the benefit of disabled users, at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. This would take into account the cost of heating and lighting, as well as the cost of site staff overtime. The scale of charges will be determined annually by the Resources Committee.

Agreed at the Resources Committee Meeting on 16th June 2023