

<b>School Policy for:</b>	Charging, Remissions and Refunds Policy		
<b>Date:</b>	December 2020		
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<b>Approved by (X):</b>	<i>Full Governing Body</i>	x	<i>Business Management Committee</i>
	<i>Pay Committee</i>		<i>Pupil and Resources Committee</i>
	<i>Curriculum and Students' Progress Committee</i>		
<b>Approval signature and/or date:</b>	2/12/2020	<i>Michael Walsh</i>	
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**Charging Remissions and Refunds  
Policy  
2020-2021**

## Policy on charging, remissions and refunds

This policy is agreed by the Governors in accordance with County Policy and reflects the [Education Act 1996: Sections 449–462](#)

Education for all our students will be free if it takes place in school time with some exceptions. These exceptions are explained below:

- We shall seek voluntary contributions for activities which will enhance the curriculum and endeavour to ensure that no child is denied opportunities to participate owing to financial hardship.
- Family hardship will be judged on the basis of common-sense and sensitivity. We believe that receipt of income support or family tax credit is a useful guide.
- Contributions for materials are acceptable on a voluntary basis in D & T Textiles, and Food Technology etc. if students wish to retain the finished product.

### Public Examinations:

No charge may be made for work associated with public examinations - there are some exceptions to this connected with activities outside school times. There is no charge for examination entry fees.

When a pupil fails to complete examination requirements for a public examination for which the LEA or Governors have paid an entry fee, the full charge shall be recovered from the pupil or parents/carers, unless the pupil was genuinely prevented from attending the examination or completing the coursework.

If a parent or guardian wishes a student to re-take an examination they will have to pay the relevant fee in advance of the examination. If the school deems it necessary for a student to resit an examination then the school will meet the relevant costs from within its budget.

### Off-site activities

A non-residential activity is in school time if 50% or more occurs in school hours. Only voluntary contributions can then be sought.

A residential activity takes place in school time if half or more of the sessions (a.m. or p.m.) take place on school days. Board and lodging charges can be made and remissions must be applied. Voluntary contributions can be sought for other costs.

### Remissions

Where the parents/carers of a student are in receipt of eligible state benefits (listed below) the Governing Body will endeavour to offer to remit 50% the cost of full board and lodging for any residential activity which is deemed to take place during the School Day or where it forms part of the syllabus for the National Curriculum.

### **Eligible State Benefits**

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, where the parent/carer is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and where income has been assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to be no more than £16,385 with effect from April 2020.
- Guaranteed State Pension Credit
- Free School Meals

The Governing Body may wish to remit in full or in part the cost of other activities for particular groups of parents/carers, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents/carers will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part. Authorisation for such remission will be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

### **Refunds**

Refunds are only available in the following circumstances:

- If a student is not able to take part in an activity due to a clash of activities, planned by the School, e.g. a music lesson taking place on the same day as a School trip.
- If a student is unable to take part in an activity and gives sufficient notice to the School, any refund of costs obtained by the School will be passed to the student. This would not include, in the case of a School visit, transport costs as this is generally purchased collectively.
- If voluntary contributions exceed the final costs of any activity, refunds will be made to individual students, if the amount is equal to or exceeds £5.00 per head. Any surplus funds of less than £5.00 per head will be paid into a central fund to support future trips and activities.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications for refunds should be made in writing to the School's Finance Office. Refunds will usually be made by cheque and all applications for refund should include the payee details.

### **Music Tuition Within School Hours**

Chilwell School accommodates self-employed music tutors to teach pupils on site and during the school day. Parents/carers of pupils entitled to any of the above eligible benefits may apply for free tuition if their child is studying music for GCSE or A Level examinations. Otherwise charges for music lessons are a private matter between parent/carer and the music teacher.

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## **General**

We shall continue to invite parents to make voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activity. There will be no obligation and children will not be treated differently. If voluntary contributions are insufficient to meet the cost of a trip it may have to be cancelled.

Charges will be made for damage, breakage or loss of property and equipment due to misbehaviour or negligence.

There is a detailed document available for any parent, governor or teacher to read, entitled "Charging for School Activities" ([www.governor.net.co.uk/](http://www.governor.net.co.uk/)) (see attached) or a copy may be requested from the school.

# Charging for activities connected with school

**If you have difficulty in contributing financially towards a school activity, do have a word with the head teacher or a senior member of the pastoral staff, such as the head of year. The school *may* be able to help directly or at least point you in the right direction for assistance.**

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The following guidance, in 'frequently asked question' format, outlines the legal position on charging for activities connected with school:

School governing bodies must have a policy on charging for activities that take place during, or outside of, the school day. Without such a policy, they are not allowed to make any charge<sup>1</sup>. As with any school policy, you are entitled to see it at the school. If you want a copy to take away, the school can make a charge to cover photocopying costs.

## **Can schools charge for activities taking place during the school day?**

The general rule on charging for activities connected with school is that schools may not *charge* for activities that are part of the curriculum, such as swimming, or which support the curriculum, such as the provision of books and equipment, but they may ask parents for a *voluntary contribution* towards these activities. Schools must state this clearly in any letters to parents that ask for money for the activity; and indeed it is good practice to set out clearly how the activity is to be financed when it is first offered.

## **What happens if there aren't enough voluntary contributions to cover costs?**

If the school cannot afford to support the activity with insufficient voluntary contributions, they may have to cancel it. This is sometimes stated in the initial letter that you receive about the activity.

## **What if I am unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution? How does this affect my child?**

The school cannot exclude your child from taking part in an activity that is part of the curriculum, purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuse to make, a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

## **What support can a school offer me as a parent/carers who has difficulty making a financial contribution?**

Any support that is offered to individual families to enable a child to take part is given at the discretion of the head teacher/governing body. The school might decide, for

example, to waive charges for an activity such as individual music tuition for a pupil whose parent/carer is in receipt of income support or family credit, or whose income is assessed at the level equivalent to qualify for those benefits.

### **My child is going on a residential school trip. Can the school charge for this?**

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home, the school is allowed to make a charge for board and lodging in all cases, whether or not the residential trip takes place in school hours. If the activity takes place outside school hours and does not form part of the requirements of an official public examination (such as a GCSE or A Level field course), the school can make a charge for travel. Again, if you have difficulty with paying, you should not hesitate to discuss your circumstances in confidence with someone at the school and they will advise you as to what help might be available.

### **What about charges for transport during school hours?**

Any transport provided by the school in school hours will be normally be provided free of charge (though a voluntary contribution could be requested!). However, where your child makes use of transport not provided by the school to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided, by the school, then the school may well expect you to meet the costs of such travel. An example of this at secondary school level is travel direct from home to a work experience placement. As in the other examples above, you should not hesitate to discuss any difficulties in paying with the school.

### **Can the school charge for something like cooking ingredients or materials needed for a technology lesson?**

The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

### **We have been told we'll have to pay the entry fee for some of our child's examinations. Can the school do this?**

In some circumstances, yes. For example, if your child has not completed his or her coursework for an examination, or is otherwise failing to come up to the required standard, the school may feel that it is not a good use of public money (taxes!) to enter your child for that examination. They may, however, offer you the possibility of paying the exam fee up front on the understanding that it will be refunded if your child obtains a grade in the exam that is agreed between you and the school. All of this is down to the discretion of the school and they will tell you what the relevant exam fees are, if and when the situation arises. There are no hard and fast rules and you need to discuss/negotiate with the school. If your child fails to attend an examination for which he or she was entered, the school is entitled to ask you to pay the entry fee (or to retain any fee paid up front, as described above).

## **What happens about charging where an activity takes place out of school hours?**

This kind of activity is often referred to as an 'optional extra' and schools can charge to cover the cost of providing such activity. This can include:

1. the pupil's travel costs;
2. the pupil's board and lodging costs;
3. materials, books, instruments and other equipment;
4. non-teaching staff costs;
5. entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres etc;
6. insurance costs;
7. the cost of engaging a teacher, who is already an employee, on a contract for service, as distinct from a contract of employment, specifically for the activity.

### **Can the school charge for clothing used at school?**

Although no charge can be made for 'equipment' for use in connection with education provided during school hours, clothing is specifically excluded from the definition of equipment. Parents can therefore be asked to provide their children with such things as cooking aprons, PE and sports kit, and football boots. If this is difficult for you, please discuss in confidence with someone at the school.

### **...and a final word on voluntary contributions**

We've mentioned 'voluntary contributions' several times in the above FAQs.

To summarise: There is no legal reason why a school should not invite parents/carers to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of providing activities both within and outside school hours, provided that such contributions are genuinely voluntary, and that any request for contributions makes it clear:

- a) that there is no obligation to contribute; and
- b) that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parent/carer makes such a contribution.