



Straits Primary School

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY 2025-26

Based on 'Charging for school activities' Departmental advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities – May 2018

Introduction

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. This guidance has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in "A Guide to the Law for School Governors". This guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms. Schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed in this policy of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school residential visits.

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

- an admission application to any maintained school or academy;
- 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;
- tuition for pupils 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 that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.

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
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, 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 that is not 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; and
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit. **(At Straits this relates to the Year 6 Residential trip);**

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;

- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- 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.

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 the full charge.

Furthermore, 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. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

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.

Voluntary Contributions

At Straits we will request voluntary contributions towards workshops and educational visits. These will be subsidised, where possible by the main school budget, in order to keep contributions reasonable.

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, 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, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, 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 payments into the school or maintenance funds. Schools should also ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents when requesting for contributions.

After School Activity Clubs

The school offers additional after school activity clubs provided by both school staff and outside organisations. These sessions are subject to a small charge to ensure their continued operation and parents may book places through our online payment system. In order to provide wider opportunities to those pupils eligible for free school meals or families of service children, one free place is offered per half-term.

Purchasable items

The school offers parents the opportunity to purchase the following items at cost price:

- School Ties / Year 6 Ties
- Book Bags
- Swimming Caps

Freedom of Information

As outlined in the Freedom of Information Act there may be a charge, in line with LA recommendations, for information requested.

Disclosure & Barring

Fees for Disclosure and Barring applications, if undertaken by the school, will be passed on to applicants.

Photocopying Charges

The school will pass on charges for photocopying documents in line with school information only at a cost of A4 colour 15p and black and white A4 10p per sheet.

Residential Visits

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place 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; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming residential visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

In addition to this, the voluntary contribution requested by the school for any residential visit will be reviewed for the children who qualify for the pupil premium and will be subsidised by up to 50%.

The pupil premium is applied to children who:

- are registered and in receipt of free school meals currently or in the past 6 years.
- are looked after children;
- have been adopted from care under the Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- have left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order; or
- have parents/carers in the armed forces.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing during school hours, if it is provided at the request of the parent. No charge may be made in respect of a looked after pupil.

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 pupil(s).

Transport

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Guidance on school travel is available on the DfE website

Damage and Loss of Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge will be the cost of replacement or repair, or a lower cost may be set at the decision of the Head Teacher. A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect, or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or a lower cost, may be set at the decision of the Head Teacher.

Review

The Headteacher and the Finance and Personnel committee will ensure that this policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Headteacher

Chair of Finance and Personnel Committee

Agreed at Finance and Personnel Committee meeting on