

Charging Policy

Barton Seagrave Primary School



Approved by:

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Last reviewed on:

September 2024

Next review due by:

September 2026

Introduction

1. This charging policy has been compiled in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements and in accordance with s449-462 of the Education Act 1996 and guidance issued by the DfE dated November 2013. This policy applies to all maintained schools in Northamptonshire.

Education

2. School governing bodies and the local authority **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 is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
 - 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.
3. 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 paragraph 4);
 - music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (paragraphs 12-14);
 - certain early years provision;
 - community facilities.

Optional Extras

4. 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 (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.
5. 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 the 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.
6. 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.
 7. 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.
 8. 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

9. Nothing in legislation prevents the schools governing body 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 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.
10. 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 source then it must be cancelled. This must be made 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.
11. 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 payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

Music Tuition

12. Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.
13. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.
14. Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.
15. The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Transport

16. The School 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 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.

Residential Visits

17. 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.
18. Schools **can** charge for:
 - board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.
19. When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of Pupil Premium will receive a discounted rate for the trip