

Hertfordshire County Council

St. Paul's Walden School



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Charging Policy

Review: In 2021

Date Approved:

Signed Headteacher:

Signed Chair of Governors:

CHARGING POLICY FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

(Based on the guidance provided in the 'governors' handbook, Section 7- January 2015
<http://www.clerktogovernors.co.uk/governors-handbook/section-7/>)

The Local Authority or Governing Body may not charge for anything unless they have drawn up a statement or general policy on charging. The Governing Body's policy may be more or less generous than the Local Authority's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it must be free. However, the school may charge for activities outside of school hours where these are not a necessary part of the national curriculum. Provisions before and after the school day, which delivers the National Curriculum or prepares a child for a public examination, may not be charged for.

Aim

A creative and challenging curriculum which makes the most of each child's interests, skills and aptitudes and encourages them to strive for excellence will include a wide range of additional activities. The school may invite parents to make voluntary contributions to some of these and can charge for others.

Charges

The school can charge for the following activities:

- Instrumental tuition of an individual child or small groups.
- The cost of board and lodging for a residential trip (except for pupils whose parent(s) are receiving Income Support or similar allowances)
- Activities run by external organisations either outside school hours or during lunchtimes. In the case of external organisations, the charge is made by and paid to the organisation itself.
- Ingredients / materials for practical subjects where the parents indicate that they or the child wish to own the finished product.
- Contributions towards damage or loss of equipment caused by a pupil's behaviour.
- Travel in school minibus in certain circumstances.

Voluntary Contributions

For certain activities, the Headteacher or Governing Body can ask for voluntary contributions. If it does so, it is made clear that the contributions are indeed voluntary, and the parents/carers will be told the minimum amount per child which would enable the activity to go ahead. Parents/carers must be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend on voluntary contributions, but once it has been decided to run an activity, no qualifying child will be excluded or treated differently if their parents / carers do not contribute.

If some parents/carers contribute more than the minimum, the school will assume they can use the money towards other similar activities in the future, and put it in the school general account.

The activities for which a voluntary contribution can be requested are:

- Any activity taking place during school hours, e.g. trips and visits

- Enriching activities taking place at school (e.g. a visiting theatre group)
- Material, ingredients or equipment to be used in the school day, such as in cooking.
- School funds generally.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary, though, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will 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 will be cancelled.

Help with charges or contributions

If parents / carers are unable to afford the charges or contributions, they are asked to speak to the School Business Manager or Head teacher, who will treat their request with the strictest confidence. The school has access to some sources of funding which can help in these cases, and no child will be denied the benefit of these activities due to hardship.

The circumstances that will determine remissions, grants and subsidies are:

- The child is in receipt of free school meals.
- The family is in receipt of Income support or similar.
- The child comes under the Common Assessment Framework
- The child's circumstances are deemed exceptional by the Head Teacher.

Residential Trips

Schools are permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips, even if they occur mainly during school time. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision. However, the school cannot charge for the educational or travel elements.

Where the trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of the charge for board and lodging:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's 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, assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs does not exceed the annual limit
- Pupils who receive Income Support or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to free school meals
- Parents in receipt of the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit are also entitled to free school meals
- Universal Credit

Instrumental Music Lessons

A charge is permitted for instrumental music tuition undertaken in school hours for up to and including four pupils, unless the tuition forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination (e.g. GCSE).

Public Examinations

No charges may 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 LEA 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.

Extended Schools

Any profits made by a school from providing facilities or services must be reinvested in the school or in the service.

Schools may use their delegated budgets to subsidise a child's access to chargeable extended activities, where they consider that the activities are provided for the purposes of the school, because they are of educational benefit to the child.

Schools may lawfully charge for study support (other than that which delivers the National Curriculum or preparation for a public examination) e.g. additional sports, drama and music clubs, holiday activities, visits and additional courses, i.e. first aid.

All schools should be able to provide some free study support for pupils and young people in 'workless' households through the flexibility in their delegated budgets.

Date: June 2018

Policy Review

This policy is due for review in line with the School Debt Recover Policy, or should the Herts County Council debt recovery policy change significantly.

This policy is in line with DfE guidance on Charging for School Activities (October 2014) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>
Taken from Section 13, Appendix A of St Paul's Walden School Financial Procedures manual