

DRUMADONNELL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT



CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Education Order of 1989 states that:

- All children have the right to a free education.
- All children have the right to take part in activities that take place during the normal school day whether or not their parents are able to meet any costs involved.

However, the Order does allow for certain charges to be made by the school including:-

- Activities wholly or partly outside the school day that are not part of the statutory curriculum
- Board and lodgings on residential (i.e. overnight) visits
- Materials used in practical subjects where the parents wish to own the finished product. (e.g. after school activities such as the art/craft club and cookery club)
- Breakages or damages to books and equipment

The Board of Governors and teaching staff of Drumadonnell Primary School believe that pupils attending the school should be offered the widest possible range of educational opportunities. They recognise that a wide range of additional activities, including after school clubs, educational visits and residential experiences, can make a valuable contribution to pupils' overall development. The Board of Governors has, therefore, drawn up the following Charging and Remissions Policy to meet the legal requirements as currently laid down.

CHARGING POLICY

- a) A charge will be made for visits outside school hours which are not essential to the school curriculum. The charge to each child will not be greater than the cost incurred and may, if appropriate, be less.
- b) A charge will be made for board and lodgings for overnight visits which take place during school time. The charge will not be greater than the actual cost.
- c) The Order states that a charge may be made for instrumental tuition. However, the Board of Governors will endeavour to keep costs at an affordable level by only passing on a proportion of the tuition fees to be paid on a termly basis.

- d) A charge will be made for the ingredients or materials used in practical after school activities if finished products are taken home.
- e) Parents will be asked to pay for wilful damage or loss caused to school books or equipment by their child.
- f) Parents will be asked to cover the cost of any damages wilfully caused to the school premises by their child.
- g) In certain cases, the school will permit a third party to charge parents for activities for which the Board of Governors or the Education Authority cannot charge.
- h) The Board of Governors encourages the use of the school building by the community within the limits laid down by Education Authority policy.

Each request for the use of the school premises will be considered by the Board of Governors. A charge will not be made for any activity it judges to be an extension of the work of the school or supports the work of the school.

There will be no charge for:-

- Meetings of the parents, arranged by the Principal, to discuss educational matters
- Any other event for which the Board of Governors decides there should not be a charge

A charge will be made using the present arrangements for payment under full delegation as follows.

Use of classroom £15 per 2 hours

Use of school hall £15 per 2 hours

Use of the kitchen is not under the control of the Board of Governors and must be negotiated separately with the Education Authority. Nevertheless, the Board of Governors retains the right to approve or disapprove of any such arrangement.

The building supervisor or another appropriate member of staff must be present during the period of hire unless the Principal agrees to alternative arrangements. When the building supervisor/another member of staff is present, the organisation hiring the premises will be expected to reimburse him/her for his/her time.

Nothing in this policy will prevent the Board of Governors from inviting the parents to make voluntary contributions from time to time.

REMISSIONS POLICY

Where the parents of a pupil are in receipt of Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, the Board of Governors will consider reducing the charge for board and lodgings on residential trips that are mainly within school hours or are part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In cases of hardship, the Board of Governors may invite the family to apply, in confidence, for a remission of all or part of the charge where an activity is chargeable.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

During the course of the year, a number of educational visits will be arranged that will make a valuable contribution to a pupil's understanding of the curriculum. Some of these may be provided free of charge. However, the school may invite the parents to make a voluntary contribution towards part or all of the cost. If a trip is organised on this basis, no child will be left out because his/her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. The Board of Governors reserves the right to cancel a trip if insufficient voluntary contributions are received or if the numbers taking part in the trip drop to a level at which the trip becomes unviable.

From time to time, the school may undertake general fundraising activities for the benefit of the school and the education of its pupils.

On occasions, the school may ask pupils/parents to make a contribution towards a charitable event taking place within the school.

The Nursery Unit requests a voluntary monthly contribution of £12 per month per child which is used to pay for daily snacks, play materials, visitors and trips.

DELEGATION OF POWERS

The Board of Governors recognises that it may not always be practical to meet to discuss a particular matter. As a result, governors have delegated power to the Principal to make decisions on their behalf. However, all matters concerning charging will be discussed by the Board of Governors at the earliest opportunity.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The following questions and answers will help parents and other stakeholders to understand the outworking of this policy within Drumadonnell Primary School.

1) What is the school day at Drumadonnell Primary School and Nursery Unit?

The first session in the primary school, including break, runs from 9.10am to 12.30pm. The second session commences after the lunch break at 1.15pm and ends at 3.00pm. The Nursery Unit runs each morning from 9.15 to 11.45am.

2) Is the school allowed to ask for voluntary contributions for school trips?

Entrance charges and transport costs have resulted in school trips becoming increasingly expensive. The school may, from time to time, ask parents to make a voluntary contribution to cover a portion of this expense. If not enough parents indicate that they are willing to make a voluntary contribution, the trip may be cancelled at the Principal's discretion. If a visit does go ahead, no child will be refused a place or discriminated against because his/her parents were unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution.

3) Would a trip to England, Scotland or Wales for Primary 6 and 7 pupils be possible under the current regulations?

It would be impossible for the school to finance such trips from within its budget/funds. However, the law does not prevent a third party, such as a travel agent, from organising and charging for such trips.

4) What about charges for swimming?

Swimming is part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum for Key Stage 2 pupils and so no charge can be made. However, as the cost of tuition and transport can place added strain on the school's budget, parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards part of the cost of this activity.

5) If my child is selected for Education Authority instrumental tuition, will I have to pay?

The school will be charged for the tuition given to individual pupils while parents will be directly invoiced for the hire of instruments. The school is entitled to levy a charge for individual instrumental tuition but, at present, only a portion of the cost is passed on to parents.

6) Can a parent decide that his/her child will not participate in any activity that is an optional extra?

Every parent has the right to withhold his/her consent. However, the school encourages the participation of its pupils in the widest possible range of experiences.

