



CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Trustees' Policy Statement on Charging and Remissions

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996, Sections 449-462, this document sets out the policies of the Board of Trustees of Plantsbrook Learning Trust in relation to charges and remissions for activities organised by schools within the Trust.

The Board of Trustees of Plantsbrook Learning Trust recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education.

The Board of Trustees aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of schools within the Trust and as additional optional activities.

The Board of Trustees recognises and supports the objectives of the charging provisions in the Education Reform Act namely:

- To maintain the right to free school education
- To establish that activities offered mainly or wholly within normal teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost
- To emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours
- To confirm the right of schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.

N.B. "School hours" are the hours that the schools within the Trust are actually in session and do not include the lunch break. Effectively, therefore, school hours are as follows:

Plantsbrook School : The period from 8.40 a.m. to 3.05 p.m. (excluding lunch).

Town Junior School : The period from 8.50 am to 3.25 pm (excluding lunch).

An activity which takes place partly in and partly outside school hours is regarded as taking place in school hours if 50% of the activity takes place within school hours. For an activity which involves residential accommodation if the number of sessions missed by the pupils is 50% or more of the number of half days involved, this activity is regarded as taking place within school hours.

In some cases it may not be easy to define the position of the activity with regard to school hours. In all cases where there is doubt, the discretion for charging will be with the Headteacher and the Board of Trustees.

CHARGES

1. For all activities that are deemed to be essential to pupils' learning i.e. the activity forms part of the syllabus of an examination prescribed by the Secretary of State, or is a requirement in connection with the National Curriculum, these will be provided by school at no cost.
2. For all activities that are deemed to enhance learning, but that are not essential, the costs must be met in full by parents.
3. For all activities that are deemed to be enrichment activities, the costs must be met in full by parents.
4. In the case of examination entries, fees will be paid for pupils prepared by the appropriate school for examinations prescribed by the Secretary of State, whether these constitute a 'retake' or not. Remarks will be paid for by the appropriate school in most cases. However, where a resit or a remark is not judged to be the best course of action by the school, pupils will be required to meet the costs in full. For examinations for which the school has not prepared the candidate, or which are not recognised by the Secretary of State, candidates will be required to meet the costs.

5. No charges will be made for materials to be used in the course of lessons or for the cost of transport in connection with an activity which takes place during school hours.
6. The appropriate school may require parents to meet the cost attached to the replacement of broken windows, broken or damaged fixtures, fittings and equipment, damaged, defaced or lost text and exercise books where these are the result of a pupil's behaviour.
7. A copy of a pupil's school record will be provided upon a written request from the parent/guardian. Copies of such documentation will be provided within 15 school days of such written request. A charge will be made for photocopying prior to despatch of documents.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

For all activities where charges may not be made, voluntary contributions will be invited from parents. Pupils will not be prevented from taking part in the activity if parents do not make a voluntary contribution. For such activities there is no obligation to contribute, but if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school reserves the right to cancel the activity if insufficient contributions are received.

The activities include contributions in either kind or cash towards materials for certain subject areas such as Technology.

REMISSIONS

If the activity is part of a prescribed examination syllabus or a requirement in connection with the National Curriculum, financial assistance will be considered. Parents in receipt of Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an gross annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190, Working Tax Credit Run-on paid for 4 weeks after Working Tax credit qualification ceases and Universal Credit will receive automatic remission of such costs. If appropriate, the appropriate school will seek to fund such activities, if at all possible, either from School Fund or Pupil Premium.

All other charges which schools within the Trust or Trustees are empowered to make may be remitted, in accordance with the policies of the Local Authority (where applicable) in whole or in part, or at the discretion of the Head Teacher of the relevant school and the Board of Trustees.

RECOVERY

If a student fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the school has paid, or is liable to pay an entry fee, then that fee will be recoverable from the parent. Failure to complete the examination requirements will include failure to complete the coursework requirements and/or failure to sit the final examination(s). It may also include failure to complete satisfactory attendance during the two years preceding the examination. The decisions as to what constitutes a 'good reason' will rest with the Board of Trustees.

LETTINGS AND HIRE OF ROOMS

On occasion, facilities in the schools within the Trust may be hired out for a cost. A schedule of these costs may be obtained, on request, from the Finance Office of Plantsbrook Learning Trust.. Trustees would expect those groups hiring rooms to look after the facilities and to ensure they are left in a good condition (as per the terms and conditions of the Lettings Policy). Trustees would, therefore, consider taking action against any group misusing them. Certain groups may be refused the use of rooms or facilities, e.g. political groups whose views might contravene the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy. The discretion for this rests with the Headteacher of the relevant school. There is a right of appeal to the Board of Trustees.

TRUSTEES' REPRESENTATIVES

The Trustees retain responsibility for this policy and will require the Head Teachers of the schools within the Trust to report to them, as they consider appropriate, on its operation. This policy statement will be reviewed as appropriate and amended as necessary. Any such amendments will be reported to parents at the earliest opportunity.

Copies of this document will be issued to all parents of new pupils and copies will also be available for consultation in the schools within the Trust.