

Plover Primary School

CHARGING POLICY



A guide for parents!

CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this policy is to set out the charging and remission for school activities and school visits.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by LAs in England. This policy complements the information given in “A Guide to the Law for School Governors” (Chapter 23) and accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996.

School will ensure that it informs parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 3 of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

EDUCATION

The School Governing Body and LA cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any maintained school;
- 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 them to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (*see page 4*)

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Charges will 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.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not 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 will not include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will 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 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

Nothing in legislation prevents the school governing body or LA 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 will make this clear to parents at the outset.

It is important to note that no child will 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 will be cancelled. School will make sure that this is made clear to parents.

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.

Where a voluntary contribution is made to the 'transport cost' element of a visit, the contribution will not be refunded in the event of the child missing the visit through absence.

RESIDENTIAL VISITS

School will charge for:

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

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit it will 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 (IS)
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16190 (Financial Year 2013/14);
- The guarantee of State Pension Credit; and

- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

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.

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), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

It is the policy of the school that no charges will be made for music lessons (individual or groups)

TRANSPORT

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 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;