

Appendix F – ALF School Charging and Remissions Policy

Charging Policy

Charges for School Activities

Legislation allows schools to charge for certain activities which take place both inside and outside school hours. Norfolk County Council has adopted a policy, which it recommends to governors, but it is for governors of schools to decide whether or not to follow the policy. The school's charging policy must be described in its prospectus, which can be obtained from the school. It is also a requirement that the school's charging policy is provided on its website. If your child's school governors follow the County Council's charging policy, these are the activities and materials for which you will be charged:

Music tuition

Vocal or instrumental tuition, which is not part of the syllabus for an approved public examination, part of the national curriculum or provided under the first access to the key stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme.

Charges may be made for tuition provided individually or to groups of any size, provided the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil/student's parent/carer.

No charge may be made in respect of a pupil/student who is looked after by the local authority.

Ingredients and materials

Ingredients and materials for practical subjects where parents have indicated in advance that they wish to receive the finished articles.

Travel

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils/students to or from school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- Transporting registered pupils/students to other premises where arrangements have been made for pupils/students to be educated.
- Transport enabling a student to meet an examination requirement where prepared for that examination at the school.

Board and lodging

Board and lodging will be charged in all cases where a school activity involves pupils/students in nights away from home. The charge must not exceed the actual cost.

Activities outside school hours

A charge can be made for all non-residential activities, which take place wholly, or more than 50% outside school hours, where the child's participation has been agreed in advance by the parents/carers. The charge can include the

cost of travel, entrance fees, insurance, books, equipment and any staff (teaching or non-teaching) engaged specifically for the activity.

Residential trips

A residential trip is deemed to take place outside school hours if the number of 'missed' school sessions is less than 50% of the number of half days taken up by the trip.

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, part of a syllabus for a public examination the student is being prepared for at the school or part of religious education.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils/students on a residential visit.

Schools can ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- Any activity taking place during school hours
- School equipment
- General school funds

Children of parents/carers unwilling or unable to contribute may not be discriminated against. If insufficient voluntary contributions are received, with no alternative method to make up the shortfall, the activity should be cancelled. It is advisable to make parents aware from the outset of the possible cancellation of an activity if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

Public Examinations

Charges are made for the entry of a student for a prescribed examination for which he/she has not been prepared by the school, or where the student entered for examinations in the same subject with two examination boards.

Remission of charges

Only parents/carers who are in receipt of Universal Credit (when fully rolled out), Income Support, Working Families' Credit, Disabled Person's Tax Credit or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance are eligible for remission of charges. Remission of charges only applies to board and lodgings charges, which are levied directly by the LA or the school and where they relate to activities, deemed to take place wholly or partly in school hours.

Remission will not apply to such charges when they relate to activities wholly outside school hours, except if the activity is prescribed in a syllabus for a public examination, if it is prescribed by the national curriculum or fulfils duties relating to religious education.

Parents/carers who have difficulty meeting any charges should discuss the matter in confidence with the Executive Headteacher.

Library book returns

Where students who have books overdue by three months (12 weeks), and repeated reminders fail or books are lost, a charge of £5 towards a replacement will be made.

Activity Accounts

The full contribution to an activity will be refunded if a child is absent due to illness.

If a trip has to be cancelled parental contributions will be refunded.

All extra curriculum activities/visits will be reconciled individually and any surplus or shortfalls will be treated as outlined below:

Any surplus in excess of £15 per pupil/student will be refunded to the payer. Any amounts below this will be transferred into the School Funds General Account.

Any shortfall of £15 will be supplemented by the School Funds General Account. Shortfalls above £15 per pupil/student will be referred to the Director of Business and Community Strategy for authorisation.

The nursery charging policy is now a separate document and was agreed earlier this year.

Useful Links:

Learning Outside the Classroom guidance:

<http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/GCharging-Policy-Updated-PDF-1APR09.pdf>

Latest DfE guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>