Sackville School
Charging and Remissions Policy

Reviewed by: Steven Harrison **Date adopted:** May 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027

West Sussex County Council

POLICY ON CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

This document explains the legislation governing the charging for school activities as set out in the Education Act 1996: Sections 449-462. It covers what a governing body may and may not charge for when activities take place either during or outside of school hours, including residential activities. The need to have charging and remissions policies and requests for voluntary contributions is also addressed.

EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

1. Education provided during school hours must be free. No charge can be made for:
   - admitting students to maintained schools.
   - transport provided in school hours by the Local Authority (LA) or by the school to carry students between the school and an activity. "School hours" are those when the school is actually in session and do not include the break in the middle of the school day. It would be good practice for schools to make this information available to parents and others.
   - Tuition for students 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 for which the pupil is being prepared at the school, or part of religious education. (But see para. 11 below for exceptions.)

2. A school's governing body can also provide community services and facilities on the school's premises (guidance is available in the extended schools area of the Teachernet website) and set up a company in accordance with the powers for governing bodies set out in Section11 of the Education Act 2002.

3. Charges may be made for:

   - Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where parents wish their child to own them *(see example letter 1)*
   - Optional extras (see para. 8) *(see example letter 2)*
   - Music and vocal tuition in limited circumstances (see para. 12)

EDUCATION PARTLY DURING SCHOOL HOURS

5 Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge may be made. (Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours.)

6. As an example, a long-distance trip might involve much travel before and after normal school hours, but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours, the trip would count as happening in school time and be free of charge. By contrast, a trip that involved leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but then went on until quite late in the evening, would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed, provided the activity was not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil was being prepared at the school and not part of religious education. (See para 8.)

EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

7. Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or do not form part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education. In addition, no charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination (see paragraph 14 on Public examinations).

8. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 describes activities that can be charged for as "optional extras". It is up to the LA or governing body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge, but any charge must not exceed the actual cost per individual child for whom charges are being made. *(See example letter 2)* 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 for which the pupil is being prepared at the school
  c) part of religious education

- Examination entry fees if the pupil has not been prepared for the examination at the school

- Transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where arrangements have been made for the pupil to be provided with education

- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide and optional extra. This includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical, where the tuition is an optional extra.

RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

9. Special rules apply for residential activities. A trip counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the students amounts to half or more of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. Each school day is normally divided into two sessions and each 24 hour period is divided into two half-days beginning at noon and at midnight.

10. On this basis, a term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9.00 p.m. on Sunday would last for nine half-days, include five school sessions and would count as taking place in school time. A trip from noon on Thursday to 9.00 p.m. on Sunday would count as seven half-days, include three school sessions and would be classified for charging as taking place outside school time. If fifty per cent or more of a half-day is spent on a residential trip, you should treat the whole of that half-day as spent on the trip.

11. If a residential activity takes place largely during school time, meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for

the cost of travel. However, charges, not exceeding the actual cost for the individual pupil, can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances except for students whose parents are receiving:

- Income Support;
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

The school must advise all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits. *(See example letter 3)*

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TUITION

12. There is an exception to the rule about not charging for activities in school hours. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Education (DfE) to specify circumstances where charges can be made for music tuition. The new regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide students with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

13. 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. Guidance about the charging regulations can be found on TeacherNet. 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).

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

14. No charges may be made for entering students for public examinations that are set out in Regulations. The governing body must enter a pupil for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the school has prepared the pupil. This does not apply if the governing body thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil, or if the pupil's parents request in writing that the pupil should not be entered. The LA may not override the governing body's decision on whether to enter a particular pupil for an examination.
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 LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

15. 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.

ACTIVITIES NOT RUN BY THE SCHOOL OR LA

16. When an organisation acting independently of a school or LA arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents want their children to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents. Parents must then ask the school to agree to their children being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take their children out of

school for a family holiday. However, where an activity is organised by a third party and is approved by the school, is educational, or is supervised by someone authorised by the school, then it is the DCSF's view that it should be treated as if it were provided by the school and no charge should be made to the parents or students. Such an activity, if it takes place outside the school premises, is an "approved educational activity" within the meaning of Regulation 4A (a) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended).

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

17. Although schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind) to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. Governing bodies should also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents this should be explained to them at the planning stage. *(see example letter 4)*

18. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible and there is no way to make up the shortfall, the activity must be cancelled. The essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot, or will not, make a contribution of any kind. The school must first decide which class, or group of students, will benefit from the activity and then look for voluntary contributions, or by general fundraising. Governors would be free to use the school budget share to meet the cost of such activities.

CHARGING POLICIES

19. The LA or governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy on charging.

20. If a charge is made for each pupil it must not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are required, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions, general fundraising, or from the school budget share.

21. The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity, but only if those teachers have been given a separate contract to provide the optional extra. A contract need not be a formal document. It could be a simple letter to a teacher asking him or her to provide a service on a particular occasion.

SCHOOL MINIBUSES

22. Only the school's students, staff or parents may travel for a charge in a school's minibus, although no charge can be made to students when the vehicle is used during school hours or for the undertaking of educational activities outside of school hours related to the National Curriculum or prescribed examinations. (See para. 1). A school's minibus may not be used for transportation of the general public.

23. Schools may charge for transport in their minibuses only if they hold a permit issued under Section 19 of the Education Act 1985. In some cases, the permit exempts the school from Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator and driver licensing requirements. A permit is not required if no charge is made in cash or kind. Schools should apply to their LA for a permit for each minibus.

24. Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running the vehicle, including loss of value. But the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit-making activity, even if any profit would go into the

school's other running costs or for charitable purposes. A charge is any payment made in cash or kind (for example, a club subscription) by or on behalf of a person that gives him or her right to be carried.

25. Further information is available from LAs or the regional Traffic Commissioners. Addresses may be found in the phone book or at the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) website, www.vosa.gov.uk.

THE LAW

N.B. As legislation is often amended and Regulations introduced, the references made in this document may be to legislation that has been superseded. For an up-to-date list of legislation applying to schools, please refer to the GovernorNet website, www.governet.co.uk

Education Act 1996: Sections 402, 449-462

The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989: SI 1989/377

The Education (Residential Trips) (Prescribed Tax Credits) (England) Regulations 2003: SI 2003/381

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995: SI 1995/2089 (as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 1997 SI 1997/2624, and by the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations: SI 2001/2802)

GUIDANCE

Passenger transport provided by voluntary groups (Department of Transport) PSV 385 (available free from regional Traffic Commissioners whose addresses may be found in the phone book or at www.vosa.gov.uk).

MODEL POLICY ON CHARGING AND REMISSIONS FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (Draft for your consideration and appropriate modification) Purpose of the policy The purpose of this policy is to provide clear information about charging and voluntary contributions for ……..'s school activities. Voluntary Contributions In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it should be free. It is therefore not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or admission costs for swimming lessons or for visits to museums, etc. during school hours. The …… school follows the West Sussex policy for charging for school activities that mirrors the information given in the Department for Education's advice document published in November 2013 (https://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00213976/school-charging). No compulsory charge will be made for any activity which takes place during school hours. Any contribution is entirely voluntary, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute are not discriminated against. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then the activity will be cancelled. Arrangements All letters regarding contributions for school activities will make it clear that these are voluntary, and that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated differently. If any parents have any financial difficulty (no child will be prevented from taking part) they will be invited to talk to the headteacher who will come to an agreed arrangement. Residential trips Special rules apply for residential activities. a) In School Hours If a residential activity takes place largely during school time (50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity occurs within schools hours), it meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination or is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge will be made either for the education or for the cost of travel. However, charges not exceeding the actual cost for the individual pupil will be made for board and lodging. Voluntary contributions (as above) will be requested. 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 these charges: • Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances • Income support • Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (IBJSA) • Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 • Child Tax Credit, (provided that the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit, and their annual Income, assessed by HMRC does not exceed £16,190 for the year 2013/14 • Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit • An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008 b) Outside School Hours An activity is deemed to take place out of school hours if 50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity occurs out of school hours. In this case, and for a residential trip, this will be considered as an 'optional extra' and a charge will be levied which includes an appropriate element for travel costs, board and lodging costs, materials and other equipment, non teaching costs and teaching staff costs. This charge will not exceed the actual cost of the provision. Parents in receipt of the allowances identified above have the same entitlements. Music Tuition There will be no charge for musical tuition if the teaching is an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. For other musical tuition, charges will be made for individuals or groups up to …… to play a musical instrument, and for the hire and repair of instruments which are used for instrumental tuition at school. No charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989). Monitoring and Review of Policy The Governing Body will review this policy every 3 years, and as necessary due to any changes in legislation. Approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on……..Date

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Please see the Learning Outside the Classroom guidance on school policies available at: http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/GCharging-Policy-Updated-PDF-1APR09.pdf

EXAMPLE LETTER 1

(Ref charging policy Paras 4 and 8)

Dear Parent,

During each school year students, as part of the curriculum, may make certain articles out of materials provided by the school. There are also occasions when specific books, equipment or instruments might be acquired for students.

At times, parents might wish to own such items, and it is possible for these to be purchased from the school at a price equivalent to the cost incurred by the school.

If you are interested in buying any items, please either detach and return the slip below indicating your wish to make a purchase or write to me at any time during the year. You will be told the cost of any item in a note which your son/daughter will bring home. Payment would become due immediately. Naturally, if you do not wish to own any particular article, your child will not be disadvantaged in any way as the school has a duty to provide all materials and equipment to ensure an effective delivery of the National Curriculum.

If any parent is interested in owning materials or equipment, but feels unable to meet the cost at present, please do not hesitate to make an appointment with me to discuss how a resolution might be achieved.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

EXAMPLE LETTER 2

(Ref charging policy Paras 4 and 8)

Dear Parent,

Example: Visit to Theatre

It is intended to arrange a visit to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx on xxxxxxxx(date). for a performance of xxxxxxx commencing at 5.00 p.m.. The journey will be by coach, leaving the school at 2.30 p.m. Return to school is expected to be about 10.30 p.m.

As the major part of the journey is outside of school hours and the activity is not directly related to the children's curriculum or an examination for which they are being entered, there will be a charge for the visit amounting to £xx per head. This includes the cost of the coach and of the theatre ticket.

Participation in the visit is voluntary. Those students choosing not to take part will follow a normal timetable until the end of the school day at 3.30 p.m when transport home will be as normal.

If any pupil/student wishes to take part in the trip, but current circumstances make it difficult to meet the charge, please do not hesitate to contact me in confidence to discuss whether it is possible to reach some mutual arrangement.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

EXAMPLE LETTER 3

(Ref charging policy Para 9)

Dear Parent

Residential Visit

We are proposing to arrange a residential trip to xxxxxxxx next year/summer/autumn for Class/Year X students. The dates planned are xx xxxx to xx xxxx 20xx inclusive, and the children/students will stay at xxxxxxxxxxx *(name of hotel/establishment)*. The purpose of the trip is to enhance the curriculum for the children/students and they will benefit *(give brief details of educational opportunities and benefits).*

The total cost per pupil for the trip will be £xxx, which includes an element for board and lodging, which is chargeable to parents.

The cost of board and lodging will be £xx per child/student, which includes breakfast, packed lunch and dinner. Payment of a £xx deposit is required by *(date),* with the balance being paid by *(final date)* either in a lump sum or by installments as agreed with the leader of the trip.

If a family is in receipt of specific benefits, the school is obliged by law to waive the charges. A list of the benefits applicable are set out in the School Prospectus and in the school's charging policy, which are available from the school office. If you wish to speak to me in confidence about the entitlement to waive charges, please do not hesitate to contact me to arrange an appointment.

All other costs, including transport, will be £xx, and parents are being asked to make a voluntary contribution of all or part of this amount. Parents are not obliged to make a contribution, but it is probable that, if insufficient monies are received, the trip will have to be cancelled. If there are exceptional cases of hardship, the school will try to support costs through its own budget, but this would reduce what we are able to spend in terms of materials and equipment for the children.

Further details of the trip will be sent at a later date.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

EXAMPLE LETTER 4

(Ref charging policy Para 17)

Dear Parent

Visit to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

It is intended to arrange a visit for Classxxx/Yxx students to xxxxxxxxx on *(date)*. The journey will be by coach, leaving school at x.xx am. Arrival back at school will be at about x.xx p.m. and, if you wish your child to participate, you would need to meet your child, or make arrangements for his/her collection, at that time.

You are invited to make a voluntary contribution of £x to cover the cost of the transport and other incidental expenses, but you would need to provide a packed lunch. Although the contribution is voluntary, I do need to point out that it is probable that the visit could not take place unless all parents, who are able, are willing to contribute.

I appreciate that some families might find it particularly difficult to contribute all or part of the suggested sum, and if you feel that you are in such a position, please do not hesitate to contact me in confidence to discuss whether some suitable arrangements can be made to cover the cost of your child's participation.

I also need to stress that if a family were unable to contribute, and the trip were still to proceed, no child within the class/year group for whom the trip is intended will be disadvantaged and be left out of the activity.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher