



Stebbing Primary School Charging Policy

Created/updated October 2023

Due for review October 2024

Ratified by the Governing Body October 2023

(This DFE recommends this policy is reviewed annually)

Introductory statement

The education reform act 1988 requires that education should be free from charge if:

- it takes place in school sessions, ie. 8.40 am - 12 noon, 1.00 pm - 3.00 pm;
- it is part of the National Curriculum or part of an agreed syllabus

The only exceptions allowed are:

- individual (one-to-one) instrumental tuition. (NB. There is no obligation for the Governing Body or LA to provide individual instrumental tuition)
- Design and Technology materials (where parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the end product)

This policy covers all other situations.

Summary of the main areas covered by this policy

1. Definition of charges
2. Optional Extras
3. Charging for Education held partly within school hours
4. Remission of Charges
5. Voluntary Contributions
6. Refunds

APPENDIX A: sample of letter to parents asking for contributions towards the cost of a visit

The Policy

1. Definition of Charges

The legislation refers only to charges made by the LA, the school, or the governing body for "*optional extras*" (see 2 below) outside of school hours.

- Outside organisations, i.e. a third party, may charge parents/pupils for activities, visits/services involving pupils from the school within school time. Parents would be under no obligation to receive these services and children not receiving them would be found suitable alternative activities. Parents may also be invited to make a "voluntary contribution" to meet the cost of providing an activity/visit.

2. Optional Extras

Charges can be made for optional extras, ie. activities that take place outside the school sessions. The participation of children in these "optional extras" depends solely on the basis of parental choice.

- If sufficient parents do not wish their children to participate in "optional activities", then the proposed activity need not take place
- Before the optional activity can take place, parents must be asked, in advance, whether they agree to the activity and are willing to pay for it
- Charges for individuals must not exceed the unit pupil cost of the activity

- Charges will not include the cost of teachers at this school. Costs for specialised teachers, teaching for the duration of the activity and not employed by the LA or governors, can be included.

3. Charging for education held partly within school hours

A charge may 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. The charge may include the cost of travel, entrance fees, insurance, books, equipment and any staff (teaching or non-teaching) engaged specifically for the activity. A charge may be made for board and lodgings, travel costs, materials, books, instruments and other equipment, non-teaching staff costs, entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres, etc, and insurance costs for pupils in respect of residential activities organised by the school or LA deemed to be within school hours.

4. Remission of charges

Only parents who are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance, Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and Child Tax Credit where the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and whose annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £16,190 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.

In cases of hardship, any parent of pupils will also be exempted from all or part of any charges at the discretion of the Headteacher and/or governors for all of the following:

- A. Board and lodging on residential visits.
- B. Tuition costs of having individual tuition for a musical instrument in school sessions.
- C. Activities or trips that take place partially or wholly out of school hours.

However, should there be any wanton damage caused by identifiable pupils, charges will be made.

5. Voluntary contributions

The Act does not prohibit the school or LA from seeking voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in respect of any school activity, whether during or outside of school hours, residential or non-residential.

It must be made clear that any contributions should be genuinely voluntary, that there is no obligation to contribute and that registered pupils will not be treated differently, according to whether their parents have made a voluntary contribution or not.

If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, then this must be made clear at the outset. It should also be made clear that the activity/visit would not take place if parents were reluctant to support it. The act states that there is no restriction placed upon the use which can be made of such contributions or the level of contribution. A sample letter to parents can be found at Appendix A.

6. Refunds

In the event of the provision of a paid for service being cancelled, where payment has already been received from parents/guardians, refunds will be made to the same source that that payment was received from. This will normally be by processing a refund to a parent's Parentmail account. If payment has been made by cash or cheque then the refund will be made directly to the parent's bank account. If it is not possible to refund to a bank account then a cash refund may be given and a receipt will be signed by the parent to confirm receipt of this. Parents will be made aware of this process before any refunds are issued.

Refunds will not be issued if a child is unable to go on the trip due to illness or other home factors if we have already paid for the trip and cannot receive a refund from the company.

A draft letter might be worded as follows:

Dear Parents

We are proposing to take children from Class X to on (date). Whilst we would like to fund this visit ourselves, we do not have the resources to meet the total cost. Therefore, before the visit can take place, £X must be raised to cover transport and admission costs of £X for the (no of) children in the class. This is an average of £X per child.

Would you please indicate on the return slip below whether or not you would be willing to make a contribution of £X? I would like to assure you that if the visit takes place, no child will be prevented from going on the grounds that no contribution has been made.

If, however, there is insufficient support for the proposed visit then, reluctantly, we shall have to cancel our provisional booking.

We shall notify you shortly if there is sufficient interest from parents for this proposed visit.

Yours sincerely

Class Teacher

To be returned to (name) before (date)

I wish/do not wish my child to take part in the visit to

*I *am willing/not willing (delete as appropriate) to make a voluntary contribution of £X for the proposed visit on (date)*

Signed..... . Child's Name