



# DORMSTON SCHOOL

## Charging & Remissions Policy

### Rationale

This policy has been formulated in accordance with guidance on: Charging for School Activities. *Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England.*

### Purpose of Policy

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a wide range of visits and activities is offered to our pupils whilst at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

### Key Points

- school governing bodies and local authorities, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in this advice, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of benefits (this is for specific benefits only) of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

### Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

### Procedures

The Governing Body of the School are responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Headteacher for implementation. Any determinations with respect to individual parents will be considered jointly by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

## Charges

The Governing Body recognise that the legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- an admission application to any state funded school- paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process.
- 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; unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
- 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
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school;
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school;
- education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any trip that takes place 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;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;
- 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;
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

Schools and local authorities **can** charge for:

- a) board and lodging on residential visits (not to exceed the costs);
- b) the proportionate costs for an individual child of activities wholly or mainly outside school hours ('optional extras') to meet the costs for:
  - (i) travel
  - (ii) materials and equipment
  - (iii) non-teaching staff costs
  - (iv) entrance fees
  - (v) insurance costs
- c) individual tuition in the playing of a musical instrument
- d) re-sits for public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school

- e) costs of non-prescribed examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school
- f) Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them.
- g) any other education, transport or examination fee unless charges are specifically prohibited
- h) breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by pupils
- i) extra-curricular activities and school clubs.
- j) community facilities.

### Remissions

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 charges for board and lodging costs during residential school trips. The relevant support payments are:

- a) Income Support (*IS*);
- b) Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance (*IB/JSA*);
- c) Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- d) 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 £16,190 in the previous financial year.
- e) Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances.

### Optional Extras

If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). This information should be made available to parents.

Charges may 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 part of religious education.
- c) examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- d) transport (other than transport that is 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);
- e) 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; the cost of buildings and accommodation or for non-teaching staff. Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore 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 cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can 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 extra 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 a school governing body or local authority 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. The governing body or head teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

Parents will be invited to make a voluntary contribution for the following:

- a) cost of any school activity, whether residential or not, which involves cost for transport or entrance fees;
- b) cost of a second entry for examinations;
- c) school fund.

The terms of any request made to parents will specify:

- a) that the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent is under no obligation to pay; and
- b) that registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution response to the request.

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Head Teacher.

Voluntary contributions will be used to:

- pay for specific school activities;
- pay for pupils' second entry for school examinations;
- activities as mentioned in the School Fund Constitution.

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, or the school cannot fund it from some other source then it will be cancelled. The Dormston School will ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The Dormston School will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When we make any requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory.

### **Music Tuition**

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

### **Transport**

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- a) transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- b) transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated.

- c) transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

### **Charging and Remissions Policy**

The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.

The Dormston Schools remissions policy sets out any circumstances in which the school or local authority propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging policy. For example, a school may decide to provide a Spanish language evening class as an optional extra. The governing body may decide to reduce the cost for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

### **Residential Visits**

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- a) education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.
- b) education provided on any visit that takes place 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; and
- c) supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

(See section 452 of the Education Act 1996 for guidance as what counts as during school hours)

When the Dormston School informs parents about a forthcoming visit, we 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.

- a) Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances.
- b) Income Support (IS).
- c) Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA).
- d) support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- e) 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 £16,190 in the previous financial year.
- f) the guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- g) an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

### **Education partly during school hours**

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, the Dormston School will determine whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

### **Non-residential activities**

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

### **Residential visits**

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

#### **Example 1: Visit during school hours**

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

#### **Example 2: Visit outside school hours**

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Resources Committee and the Head Teacher.

### **Appendices**

N/A.