

Charging Policy

January 2012

Reviewed annually by the Governing Body



Introduction

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 good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Relationship to the other school policies

The policy complements other school policies for example Educational Visits.

Roles and responsibilities of the Head Teacher, other staff and governors

The Head Teacher, staff and governors will ensure that the following apply:

No charges will be made for:

- education provided during school hours, 8.40am – 3,15pm (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National or School Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the School, or part of the School's basic curriculum for religious education
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National or School Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the School
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the School
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip.

The School may charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the parent wishes him to own them
- optional extras (see below) and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see below)

Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras':

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the National or School Curriculum
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the School
 - 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
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- sporting activities arranged by the School using external providers.

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 an 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 instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Parental agreement is a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made. The guidance includes other conditions that must be met, such as prohibiting charges that include any element of subsidy for participating pupils whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Voluntary contributions

Under the legislation, the School is entitled to ask for **voluntary** contributions 'for the benefit of the School or any school activities'. It also states that: *'If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit'*. The Priory Primary Academy reflects this in its information to parents.

Residential visits

The School **cannot** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours (8.40am – 3.15pm)
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National or School 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 visit.

The School **can** charge for:

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

When the School informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should 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 (IBJSA) or its equivalent;
- 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 £16 040 or the specified income level relevant at the appropriate time;
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and

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

Music tuition

The law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, but music lessons are an exception. At the School, we offer tuition in a variety of musical instruments both in and outside the School day and this may be provided by external providers. As this tuition is not an essential part of the National Curriculum, the charge is passed directly to the parents and no profit is made by the School.

Transport

The School **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the School premises, where the School has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body 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 visit.

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end the School will, where possible:

- publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the School year so that parents can plan ahead
- offer a scheme for paying in instalments
- extend the payment scheme beyond the date of the trip, if the trip is arranged at short notice
- avoid a “first pay, first served” basis to ensure there is no discrimination against pupils from families on lower incomes.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Resources Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving if and when appropriate a financial report on activities each term which have resulted in charges being levied, subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies; seeking to evaluate the impact of the School’s extended services on those children most in need of additional support.