



NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

FINANCE POLICY

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

Governor Group Assigned: BUSINESS AND FINANCE

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FINANCE POLICY

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

1. PURPOSE

The Education Act 1996 requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure that a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimize the financial barriers which may otherwise prevent some students from taking full advantage of the opportunities offered.

2. WHAT WAS CONSULTED?

The policy has been informed by *A Guide to the Law for School Governors, the Governors' Handbook September 2014* and reflects the most recent DfE guidance 'Charging for School Activities' October 2014.

3. CHARGES

The Principal will ensure that the following applies:

There will be no charge for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the parent;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school;

The school may charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to have them;
- Optional Activities (see detail section);
- Music and vocal tuition in limited circumstances;
- Use of community facilities

3.1 Optional Activities

Charges may be made for the following activities and for the provision of materials, books, instruments or equipment related to them:

- 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 student is being prepared for at the school;
 - c) Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the governing body have arranged for the student to be provided with education);
 - d) Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit;
 - e) Extended day services offered to students, for example, breakfast club, after-school clubs and supervised homework sessions.)

3.2 Voluntary Contributions

Under current legislation, the school can ask for voluntary contributions for any school activities. Where an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school will make this clear to parents and carers by letter as soon as the activity is offered to students. Whilst there will be no obligation for a parent to make a contribution, it will also be made clear by letter the conditions under which the activity will be judged to be not financially viable and therefore will be cancelled for all students. If a parent is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, their child will be given an equal chance to take part in the activity if the activity remains financially viable despite reduced voluntary contributions.

3.3 Residential Trips

- If a residential trip is an essential element of the curriculum or exam syllabus, for example Biology and Geography fieldtrips, there will be a charge for board and lodging.
- If a residential trip is not an essential part of the curriculum or exam syllabus there may be a charge for transport and other associated costs in addition to board and lodging. The charge will be requested as a voluntary contribution and no student will be prevented from participating because their parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution. However, the activity would only go ahead if it were financially viable for the school. In these circumstances the school makes a limited amount of funding available which can be used to support parents/carers who are in receipt of qualifying state benefits (as defined in section 5 below) by a percentage contribution to the cost of the trip. This funding can be accessed on request to the Principal or Business Manager. If not already in place the school will request that an application for free school meals is completed to support this.

3.4 Music Tuition:

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. Charges are made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided whether individually or to groups of any size, where the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent or carer.

3.5 Calculating Charges

- When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of students participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. The method of calculating charges is reviewed annually by an external auditor.
- Payments made to the School for a trip, event or specific materials, are non-refundable from the time the School enters into a financial commitment. There may be occasions when a payment is refundable whilst the viability of the trip, event or activity is being determined. Any letter will clearly state the terms of payments requested.
- When all income and expenditure for a trip, event or activity has been accounted for, a Statement of Account will be created to establish whether any underspend has occurred which may result in a refund being made. Any decision to make a refund will be taken by the Business Manager after ensuring that all costs, including administration costs, have been fully taken into account.

4. LOSS OF, OR DAMAGE TO, BOOKS AND EQUIPMENT

A charge may be requested from parents / carers in certain circumstances relating to the loss of, or damage to, any of the following:

- Books/resources
- Equipment
- Buildings
- Personal belongings

Note – This covers any damage or loss which may occur at:

- Anywhere on the school site
- On school transport to and from school, or a school-related activity
- An alternative place of education provision e.g. College or PRU,
- Another venue whilst the student is on a school trip
- A Work Experience placement

5. REMISSIONS

If the parents/carers of a student are in receipt of qualifying state benefits the Governing Body will offer to remit in full the cost of board and lodging for any residential activity which: is deemed to take place in school hours; forms part of the syllabus for the National Curriculum or is a requirement of a prescribed examination.

Qualifying state benefits are defined as:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances (The government plans to prescribe the circumstances when Universal Credit is fully rolled out).
- income support (IS)

- income based jobseekers' allowance (IBJSA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child tax credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed the threshold published by the DfES)
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance

If not already in place the school will request that an application for free school meals is completed to support this.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed biennially to ensure it meets legal requirements