ROTHBURY FIRST SCHOOL

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

This policy has been formulated in accordance with Local Authority guidance on charging for school activities.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Further information is given in "A Guide to the Law for School Governors" (Chapter 23). This guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms. This guide is also referred to in paragraph 1.82 in the School Admissions Code, and in para 1.97 in the revised School Admissions Code (in force from 10/2/09).

Schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and eligible for free school meals (and therefore pupil premium) of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Aim

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.

Responsibilities

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.
The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, practical activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and social education. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities. The governors endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. If a particular activity is limited to a specific number of pupils, the inclusion of pupils must not make reference to the ability or willingness to pay on behalf of the parent.

Prohibition of Charges

The Governing Body of the School 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);
- 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;

- 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;
- 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 provided in connection with an educational trip.

Charges
The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

- Activities outside school hours including clubs. The full cost to each pupil of any activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours including residential visits.
- Individual/Group Instrumental Tuition outside of that provided through NCC schemes. In such cases the charge will not exceed the cost of provision. Children in Care who wish to have instrumental tuition are entitled to free tuition.

Residential Visits
A charge will be made for the cost of board, lodging and travel costs (subject to statutory exceptions) the cost will not exceed the actual cost of provision. See remissions for further details.

Swimming
The school organises swimming lessons for all children in Y1, Y2, Y3 and Y4. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons. We request a voluntary contribution towards travel costs and tuition as we have to buy in external tutors at Rothbury Swimming Pool.

Music Tuition
Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule. Charges may 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. 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).

Voluntary Contributions

The Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of any activity that takes place during school hours. Parents are under no obligation to make any contribution and pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. In the event of insufficient voluntary contributions being made the activity may have to be cancelled and refunds will be given. Parents may also be invited to make a voluntary contribution for educational visits which take place outside school hours or any activity which takes place during school hours. The terms of any request made to parents will specify that the request is for a voluntary contribution and in no way represents a charge. In addition it will be made clear to parents that the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent is under no obligation to pay; and that registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request. The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Headteacher

Remissions

Where the parents of a pupil are in receipt of state benefits which would entitle their child to receive free school meals (and therefore pupil premium) the Governing Body will remit a proportion of the cost of board and lodging for any residential activity (classed as an optional extra taking place outside school hours).This is made clear in all correspondence in relation to these activities. In other circumstances the Governing Body will invite parents to apply in confidence to the Headteacher for the remission of charges in part or full. The Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors will make authorisation of remission.

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