



Schools Financial Services Guidance – Schools Charging and Remissions Policy

Reviewed October 25

INTRODUCTION

- Each Governing Body must establish and keep under review a charging and remissions policy that complies with statutory requirements and has regard to the Authority's policy statements on charging.
- No charges apply unless the governing body of the school or local authority has drawn up a charging policy giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for, and a remissions policy.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 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.
- Academies are also required through their funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities.
- There are also charging regulations for music tuition during the school day. (The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007) which came into force from 1 September 2007. Appendix A indicates specific guidance on these charging regulations.

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 defined benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

LINKS TO GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE: -

- [Charging for school activities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [The Charges for Music Tuition \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Charges for Early Years Provision\) Regulations 2012](#)

Schools cannot charge for the following activities:

- Education provided wholly or mostly during school hours. This includes the supply of any materials, books, instruments, other equipment and also transport provided in school hours to carry pupils between the school and an activity.
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination which the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental and vocal music tuition for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent / carer.
- 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 at the school (note: if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents)

The school may recover the full costs of the following activities, but charges may not exceed actual cost:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them.
- Optional extras (see below).
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see above).
- Certain early years provision (see the Education (Charges for Early Years Provision) Regulations 2012).
- Community facilities. (See S27 Education Act 2002).

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities, often referred to as 'optional extras'. This includes:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - part of the national curriculum.
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
 - part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school.

- 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).
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit (subject to remission arrangements).
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast clubs, after school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, any requests for voluntary contributions are subject to the following conditions:

- Any children of parents who do not wish to contribute will not be treated any differently.
- Where there are insufficient contributions to make the activity viable then the activity will be cancelled. This should be made clear to parents from the outset.

All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary and that there is no obligation to contribute.

Educational Visits

Schools **cannot** charge for the following:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.
- 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.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on an educational visit.

Schools **can** charge for board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents receiving specified benefits, usually equating to pupils being eligible for free school meals (due to the receipt of specified benefits, not through the introduction of universal infant FSM) will not be charged for board and lodging.

Parental Debt Recovery

Where a balance of £200 per child is reached for the Out of Hours Club and/ or £100 per child for school meals, the relevant service will be suspended for the whole family. This means that children will no longer be able to attend the Out of Hours Club and/ or will be required to bring a packed lunch until the outstanding balance is resolved. Parents will be provided with one week's written notice prior to the withdrawal of services. Services will only be reinstated once the full debt is cleared or a formal payment plan is agreed, which must cover any new fees incurred and include regular payments that actively reduce the outstanding balance.

APPENDIX A

MUSIC TUITION

Link to Government guidance:

[The Charges for Music Tuition \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[Children Act 1989 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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.

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).