

EASTFIELD INFANTS' & NURSERY SCHOOL

CHARGING POLICY

Introduction

This policy covers all areas of charging and rebates/remissions and follows the recommendations issued by Lincolnshire County Council in the School Administration Handbook; where further detail and clarification can be found.

- Educational Visits & Excursions – including voluntary contributions
- Swimming – Year 2 (non compulsory provision)
- Hot Meals
- Charging for Breakages or Losses
- Lettings of Grounds or Buildings

Principles of a Charging Policy

Education provided by any maintained school should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours. The lunch hour is not considered to fall within school hours.

Parents may occasionally offer money to help the school provide for their child's special educational needs. In no circumstances should this be accepted.

LAs and Governing Bodies are required to formulate, and keep under review; their own policies in respect of charges and remissions arrangements and no charge can be levied unless such a policy is in place.

Charging and remissions policies adopted by Governing Bodies may be more or less generous than the LA's policies provided they meet the requirements of the law. The Charging Policy should set out details of the provision and types of case for which it is proposed to make charges. Schools are expected to review their remissions policies in relation to children who are entitled to free school meals and may want to consider remissions for instrumental or vocal tuition for siblings of pupils already receiving instrumental or vocal tuition.

Charging and remissions policies should be reviewed periodically and details notified to parents as well as being included in the school prospectus.

Principles of a Remissions Policy

The remissions policy must set out the circumstances in which charges will be remitted in whole or in part. Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 states where a parent is in receipt of prescribed benefits or allowances (ie those eligible to claim Free School Meals), their child is entitled to free board and lodging on a residential trip.

The current prescribed benefits are;

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- Child Tax Credit, **provided that the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceeding the index linked amount published annually by the DfCS**
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit

This list may be added to by DfCS from time to time – for full up to date criteria see information with Free School Meals Application Forms.

As a statutory minimum, they should provide for complete remission of board and lodging charges to pupils whose parents receive the prescribed benefits above if the activity is deemed to take place during school hours, or out of school hours, but is covered by the criteria set out in paragraph 19 of DfES Circular 2/89, i.e. no charge for any activity provided to:

- Fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination.
- Specifically fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum.
- Specifically fulfil statutory duties relating to Religious Education.

It is not the intention for this school to remit or subsidise any charges made by Lincolnshire County Council under its charging and remission policy.

Lincolnshire County Council's Charging and Remission Policy

- Individual instrumental or vocal tuition, where this is over and above the requirements of the National Curriculum and/or an approved examination syllabus, where this takes place during the school day and is subject to the parent/carer requesting the tuition. (Children in the care of the Local Authority will continue to be entitled to free tuition).
 - A charge may be made.
- Transport to work experience.
 - Parents will pay directly (Except statemented pupils where the statement refers to transport).
- 'Optional extras' i.e. activities outside school time not related to statutory duties.
 - Charges will be levied unless Governors decide otherwise. The school will fund costs arising from Governors' decisions on remissions.
- Board and lodging on residential visits.
 - Charging is permitted for this element only, (other costs, such as transport etc., may be financed by voluntary contribution or from other sources).
 - If the visit is wholly or mainly in school hours, children whose parents are receipt of the benefits listed above, are entitled to the remission of these charges.
 - The cost involved will be met from the school's resources. Governors will determine and finance school policy and any remissions in addition to those required by law.
- Charges for Board and Lodging at Boarding Schools.
 - Governors to determine policy
- Re-scrutiny of exam result.
 - Parents to pay all charges unless in special circumstances Governors wish to have the papers of a number of pupils re-scrutinised.

- Exam entry for a) prescribed exam for which pupils have not been prepared by school, b) entry for an exam which is not on prescribed list or c) where preparation takes place outside school hours.
 - A charge will be made and Governors will determine and finance any school policy on remissions
- Recovery of wasted exam fees.
 - Parents to be charged but Governors may decide whether to adopt a more generous policy.

Voluntary Contributions by Parents

Parents may be invited to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of an activity for which a charge may be made, **but such requests must make it clear that there is no obligation to contribute. Pupils must not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have agreed to make a voluntary contribution.**

If a trip is planned mainly within school hours, i.e. 50% or more of the trip, including transport time, is within school hours, parents may be invited to contribute, but **no pupil may be excluded from the trip because their parents have not contributed.**

Charges made to parents must not exceed the actual cost of the activity in order, for example, to raise additional funds to cover any short fall caused by parents opting not to contribute, although there is nothing to prevent other parents making a voluntary contribution over and above that cost.

1. Educational Visits & Excursions

It is always open to a school to organise any visit it wishes in school time, and pay for the cost of the travel and any charges associated with the activity from the budget share, the school fund, or other sources.

School visits and trips taking place in school time

It is not possible for a school or the County Council to charge for any school activity, visit or trip where this takes place during school time and is organised either by one or more schools, or by the County Council, or if it is required as part of the National Curriculum.

School visits and trips taking place outside school time

Visits that take place outside school hours are described as “optional extras” and the school may charge for participation. Examples would include a trip abroad taking place wholly in the school holidays, or a day visit on one day during the weekend. Any visit which has more than 50% of its total duration outside school hours should be considered as an “optional extra”. In calculating whether a non-residential activity falls in this category, the duration of the visit is calculated by taking the duration of the activity together with any time spent on travel if the travel occurs during school hours.

School visits and trips organised by third parties

There is a possibility of a third party (other than the School or the County Council) organising a visit to take place during school time. They may charge the pupils and/or parents but cannot do so if they are organising the visit **on behalf of** the school or the County Council. There is therefore a clear distinction between activities being organised by a third party and those organised by a school through a third party (in the latter case the visit remains a school visit and the information already given about charging etc will apply).

In the event of school trips organised by a third party, the school will follow the recommendations in the School Administrative Handbook.

Residential visits organised by the school

Residential visits are treated differently. For such activities, the number of half days occupied by the activity must be compared with the number of half days of school that the pupils would otherwise have been expected to attend.

For example:

A week long (7 day) ski trip from Monday to Sunday during term time would be 14 half days. As the pupils would have been expected to attend 7 or more of those half days in school, then such a trip would be deemed to be more than 50% inside school time, and a charge could not be levied for participation.

A three day residential outward bound course from Friday to Sunday would be more than 50% outside school time, and it would be possible to charge.

A trip from noon on Wednesday to 9.00 p.m. on Sunday (9 half days in total - 5 half school days) could not be charged for, whereas one from noon on Thursday to 9.00 p.m. on Sunday (7 half days in total - 3 half school days) could be charged for.

On a residential visit no charge may be made for the cost of travel or the education provided if the activity is deemed to take place during school hours or if the visit is to fulfil:

- Any requirement specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination;
- Statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum; or
- Statutory duties relating to religious education.

Pupils can, however, be charged the cost of board and lodging except as shown in the previous paragraph. The cost charged for a pupil should not exceed the actual cost of the board and lodging for that pupil as is stated. However, if the visit is deemed to take place outside school time (and is in effect an "optional extra") charges may be made.

Where the parents of a pupil going on a residential visit, taking place wholly or mainly in school time, are in receipt of the benefits as listed below, schools may not charge for the board and lodging element of such visit. ie those eligible to claim Free School Meals.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, **provided that the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceeding the index linked amount published by the DfCS**

- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
This list may be added to by DfCS from time to time – for full up to date criteria see information with Free School Meals Application Forms

School visits and trips organised by third parties

There is a possibility of a third party (other than the School or the County Council) organising a visit to take place during school time. They may charge the pupils and/or parents but cannot do so if they are organising the visit **on behalf of** the school or the County Council. There is therefore a clear distinction between activities being organised by a third party and those organised by a school through a third party (in the latter case the visit remains a school visit and the information already given about charging etc will apply).

Schools and associated bodies such as PTAs are advised that they should have absolutely no involvement whatsoever in arrangements made by third parties in cases where the third party is not acting as the agent of the school and is charging the pupils and/or their parents. However, there appears to be no reason why individual parents or a group of parents should not do so. To all intents and purposes they should be regarded as completely private ventures and, whilst Head Teachers and Governors may grant staff and pupils leave of absence to participate, any involvement in their organisation (e.g. collecting monies) must be avoided as this could have certain implications if the activity was in any way construed as being an official school activity (e.g. under the charging and remission arrangements). The responsibility for ensuring that activities such as this are suitable and that there is adequate supervision and insurance cover rests entirely with the organisers and those taking part.

Voluntary contributions

It is always open to a school to seek voluntary contributions to offset in part or whole, the cost of a visit in school time. No pupil must be excluded, however, because they or their parents decline to make such a contribution. The cost to the child should not exceed their actual share of the visit without making it clear to parents what element of the contribution being requested covers other expenses. If the number of places available on a visit is less than the number of pupils wishing/eligible to participate, the school is entitled to select those to participate on educational grounds but the selection must be on such grounds only.

If sufficient voluntary contributions are not forthcoming the school may reserve the right to cancel the proposed visit.

Parents must be reminded on each occasion letters are sent to them about a proposed visit in school time that they are under no obligation to contribute towards its cost.

2. Swimming

Swimming becomes a compulsory element of the curriculum at the beginning of the Key Stage 2. We are keen to support swimming as part of a healthy lifestyle and as a desirable skill to enhance pupil safety. We, however, remain conscious of our primary duty to provide compulsory elements of the Key Stage 1 curriculum, such as speaking and listening, reading and writing, numeracy and social skills.

East Lindsey District Council makes a small charge per pupil to cover the hire of the pool and provision of lifeguards and swimming teachers. This is substantially subsidised and is less than half the cost of a course of swimming lessons with ELDC directly.

We wish to ensure that the cost of the optional curriculum activity; swimming, is not borne by the school at the expense of other mandatory curriculum activity. Therefore if payment is not received before the agreed administration and management deadline, the child will accompany the rest of the class to the pool but not swim thereby not incurring any charge.

3. Hot Meals

As part of the healthy schools agenda; we enable all children attending school to be provided with a hot meal at lunch time should they wish to order.

Children who are eligible to receive Free School Meals will be provided with a hot lunch when in school and a pack up for educational visits out of school free of charge. Eligibility is determined by Lincolnshire County Council following receipt of the appropriate application form.

Children's Meals

Meals are ordered a minimum of 1 week and a maximum of 1 term in advance. If not in receipt of free school meals, meals must be paid for at the time of ordering. Changes of mind can be accommodated up to the point that the order is placed with the provider. After the order is placed; changes cannot be accommodated.

Free School Meals will be provided for eligible children at the earliest available date subject to the ordering process as outlined above. If families wish, they may order and pay in advance whilst waiting for their eligibility to be determined. When the authorisation is received by the school, a refund will be issued for meals from the date of authorisation.

Where an order has been placed and a child is absent either poorly or on holiday a partial credit will be accrued to be applied to further purchases of meals. If there are any credits remaining at the end of a school year, these can be refunded.

Staff Meals

Staff are able to order a meal using the same ordering and payment system as the children. Payment will include VAT.

The cost per meal will be reviewed regularly (in partnership with the provider) and there is currently a small reduction for lunches bought by children in the nursery.

4. Charging Parents for losses and breakages

We ask parents to pay a nominal voluntary contribution towards the cost of replacing small items such as reading books, reading bags etc which have been lost or accidentally damaged. This will also apply to replacement of small items due to damage resulting from a pupil's behaviour. Where there is larger damage resulting from a pupil's behaviour eg a broken window or item of furniture, the actual cost of the repair or replacement will be requested.

5. Lettings

“An extended school is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community” (DfES).

Evaluation of extended schools in this county and elsewhere indicates that there are major benefits for schools and their communities, including higher levels of pupil achievement, increased pupil motivation and self-esteem, additional facilities and equipment and increased local opportunities for learning and access to a range of services. The extended school can thus be of particular benefit both in urban areas with high levels of social deprivation and to isolated communities where the school can provide a focus for many local services and activities.

The extended school may be anything from a weekly letting for an adult education class to a “full service school” providing a wide range of student and community services and facilities before and after the normal academic day, at weekends and during school holidays.

It is good practice to consult with all who benefit from these activities and services whenever changes are made, which might affect them, and to be mindful of immediate neighbours at all times.

There is no single model or pattern for these activities. They could include for example:

- Early Years and childcare provision
- health advice and social care
- lifelong learning activities
- sporting or cultural activities or facilities
- ICT provision
- youth clubs or after-school activities including study support
- post offices and credit unions
- Connexions advice point

In the interests of increased community cohesion and also value for money in relation to public property, Governors are prepared to consider any application for letting on its merit, subject to the letting not compromising the main purpose of the school ie education. The Head Teacher has delegated powers for this purpose and will report all applications and decisions to the Curriculum and Policy Committee and which will then report to the Governing Body via its minutes.

Charge Free Lettings:

A lettings fee will not be charged if the booking is made by or on behalf of the school and the purpose is for the direct benefit of the pupils or the school either educationally or financially. Eg Parent-Teacher Consultations, Induction Evenings for new parents, Home School Association Fundraising events, Family Learning courses involving children at the school.

Chargeable Lettings

Lettings fees will be based on those recommended by Lincolnshire County Council plus an element of profit, where applicable for business lettings.

Letting fees for other courses eg ‘Taster’ courses for parents, held during the school day will be considered individually.

6. REVIEW

This policy is reviewed every 3 years or whenever deemed necessary by the Head Teacher and Governors in the light of events, updates to Lincolnshire County Council Policy and changes in the law.

Policy reviewed by governors on 8 July 2013.

Original Signed by Mr P Barber as Chair of C & P & filed with minutes of meeting

Signed
Chair of Curriculum & Planning Committee

Planned review date:- Spring 2016