

THEALE GREEN SCHOOL CHARGING POLICY

Purpose and background

The school wishes to make a broad programme of activities accessible to as many students as possible. This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the school budget. It also defines other circumstances when the school may wish to ask for voluntary contributions.

The policy is written to comply with 'Charging for School Activities' (DCSF October 2014) (see appendix), as well as the relevant terms of the Education Act 1996, the Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999 and the Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989. It also states the school's policy for charging for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA").

(In this policy "parent" refers to "parent(s)" and/or "carer(s)" as appropriate.)

Policy objectives

Charging No student should have access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, the school reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed below.

Voluntary Contributions Where a charge cannot be made (as is often the case for activities which take place during the school day, or are an essential part of the curriculum, for the purpose of religious education or for an approved examination) a parent may nevertheless be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The matter of a voluntary contribution will not be a factor in deciding whether a pupil is allowed to participate in an activity to be financed by voluntary contributions.

When voluntary contributions are to be sought, the school reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place.

Remissions The school will apply the statutory minimum remissions to any charges that they make. In the case of particular need, remission outside these parameters will be at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher.

It should be noted that all students who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding can access £125.00 to provide for trips, activities or equipment which will benefit or enhance their educational experience.

Breakages, loss and damage caused by students The school reserves the right to require a parent to contribute, in whole or in part, to costs incurred as a result of breakages, loss or damage caused by the inappropriate action of students. Such costs may include staff time and administrative expense incurred in dealing with the matter.

Information In accordance with the school's Publication Scheme on information available under the FOIA, single copies of information will be provided free of charge unless specifically stated otherwise in the Publication Scheme. The costs of providing greater quantities of information may be charged to the recipient, these to be advised prior to the request for information being fulfilled. The decision to charge will be at the discretion of the Headteacher, except that where the costs exceed the "Threshold" as defined in the FOIA, the charge will be determined in line with the formula prescribed by the Act.

Liability for personal property The school does not accept liability for any items of personal property lost, stolen or damaged in school, although in exceptional circumstances a contribution to the replacement of a lost, stolen or damaged item may be made at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher .

Management of policy

- Staff:** This policy is implemented and managed by all staff and will be overseen by the school's Senior Leadership Team.
- Governing Body:** The Governors' Finance & Premises Committee reviews this policy on a regular basis.
- Approval:** Approved by the Finance & Premises Committee on 23 November 2017
- Next review due:** Autumn 2020

Associated policies and documents

Examination Entry Financial Management Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
School Fund

Practice and procedures

Organisers of activities should be clear as to whether an activity falls within the parameters for charging or voluntary contributions:

A - Activities that are AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education, for an approved examination, or which take place during school hours

Charging

It is not normally possible to charge for these activities.

Where a charge is allowed (see below), it may not exceed the cost that can be apportioned to the student's participation. If the cost of the chargeable element of an activity is expected to exceed the sum of the charges received then the organiser should ensure that this money is available either through department capitation, with approval of the head of department, or from Pupil Premium funding where appropriate, or by applying to the Headteacher to cover individual student's costs where the remission conditions apply.

The school will normally make a charge where the law permits it - for:

- 1 the cost of board and lodging for all residential activities subject to full remission being given those students who are currently eligible for Free School Meals
- 2 musical instrument tuition for students in groups of not more than four, if the teaching is not an essential part of the either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus;
- 3 activities that take place during lunch breaks unless the activity is an essential part of the curriculum;
- 4 any charges levied by the Local Authority for services that it provides whilst applying the remission arrangements that the Authority considers appropriate;
- 5 materials used in the production of an article where the student's parent has indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the student (nb that where a parent does not take up an offer to pay for materials in such circumstances then the student shall undertake the exercise but not be allowed possession of the article on completion);
- 6 public examination fees, only where without good reason a student fails to complete the requirements of the examination, or the student has not been prepared by the school for an examination on the school's set list, or the examination is not on the school's set list (nb the following extracts from the school's policy on examination entry:

“Re-sits

The school will pay for re-sit examinations when the student has been not been prepared for this re-sit examination during school hours. Where this would cause serious financial hardship the matter should be brought to the attention of the examinations officer and remission of charges may be offered at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Re-marks

Re-marks requested by students or parents must be paid for by them in advance of a request being submitted to the examination board. Re-marks requested by departments will be paid for centrally if the request has been approved by the school’s examination officer. Otherwise these are chargeable against department allocation.”

Voluntary contributions

These may be asked for but this must be done in line with the stated objectives of this policy. Organisers of activities and heads of department as appropriate will normally ask for voluntary contributions to cover the costs of:

- travel;
- materials, books and equipment;
- teaching costs for supply cover;
- associated support staff costs;
- Insurance
- tickets and entrance fees.

When arranging an activity the voluntary contribution requested should be set to cover the actual cost per student. Prior application may be made for support from the PP funding or Headteacher for the costs of those students where remission is applicable.

When writing to parents the benefit and educational aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated. A request for voluntary contributions must make it clear that:

- there is no obligation to make a contribution;
- no pupil will be treated differently or not allowed to participate according to whether a contribution has been made;
- it may be necessary to cancel an activity if voluntary contributions received are insufficient to meet the costs of the activity.

B - Activities available to our students that take place outside, or mainly outside, school hours that are NOT AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination (“extra-curricular activities”)

(Definition: Activities are deemed to take place mainly outside school hours if more than 50% of the time spent on the activity occurs out of school hours. Time spent on travel is included. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.)

Charging

A charge may be levied in order to support the wide range of additional extra-curricular activities arranged by the school. The organisers of activities and heads of department as appropriate will normally charge to cover the costs of:

- travel, board and lodging;
- materials, books and equipment;
- teaching costs for supply cover;

- associated support staff costs;
- Insurance
- tickets and entrance fees.

For an extra-curricular activity the charge should be set to cover the actual cost per student. Prior application may be made for support from the PP funding or the Headteacher for the costs of those students where remission is applicable.

When writing to parents the benefit and aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated. It must be made clear that support from the PP funding or Headteacher may be made available (which would be made in line with this policy's objective regarding remissions).

C – Financial procedures

In all cases the financial arrangements for activities are made using the School Fund. The organiser is expected to have presented a budget that is underwritten by the associated school cost centre, to where any unforeseen and acceptable deficit may be written off. Any unforeseen surplus, usually arising from the retention of any contingency, shall be apportioned in accordance with the School Fund Policy.

Appendix

Charging for School Activities - DCSF 2014