

THE ORCHARDS FEDERATION

GUIDANCE ON CHARGING & REMISSION POLICY



1 INTRODUCTION

The Orchards Federation is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means that all pupils have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:

- ❖ Participate fully in the school curriculum
- ❖ Contribute to all aspects of school life
- ❖ Be a valued partner in the education process

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities whether in or outside the school and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents /carers who may be on low income.

2 WE AIM TO:

- ❖ Make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income
- ❖ To encourage and promote external activities and experiences which enhance the curriculum
- ❖ To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents/carers and the school
- ❖ To respond to the wide variations in family income without placing additional and unsustainable (long term) burdens on the school budget.

The development of the range of activities forms part of the school's curriculum planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with particular emphasis on on the identification of specific resources to support such activities.

This includes a number of Key factors:

- ❖ The value of certain activities in relation to the age/needs of pupils
- ❖ The cost of an activity set against its educational value
- ❖ How the activity will be paid for
- ❖ The appropriate process for fund raising
- ❖ The assessment of whether education aims can be met in any other way
- ❖ An understanding of the various types of activities involved e.g. educational visits, materials for practical work, drinks, snacks, baking
- ❖ Reference to additional or hidden costs e.g. lunch, spending money
- ❖ An assessment of local facilities

3 GUIDANCE ON CHARGING FOR ACTIVITIES

a LEGISLATION – Education During School Hours

The DFE in its guidance to school Governors states that

'education provided during school hours must be free'. The definition of 'education' includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the LEA or school to carry pupils between the school and an activity'

It goes on to advise that;

'Although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or kind)... the essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind'

b LEGISLATION – Education Outside of School Hours

'Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not necessarily part of the National Curriculum or religious education. .. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 described activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras'. It is up to the LEA or governing body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.'

c RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

'For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the costs of travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances.'

All relevant legislation is contained in the Education Reform Act 1988; Sections 106 – 111, 117 & 118. Guidance is also contained in the DES circular 2/89;Charges for School Activities

6 REMISSION POLICY

To ensure that access to activities becomes a reality and that outcomes reflect intentions, The Orchards Federation will implement the following Remissions Policy.

The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that we are able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income may have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

To this end, all staff will ensure that no child is singled out, publicly identified or stigmatised in any way should parents be unable or unwilling to contribute to the cost of school activities. This will be achieved through sensitive requests for voluntary charges or contributions to school funds.

7 INFORMING PARENTS

The Orchards Federation will follow the DFE Guidelines which states that 'The LEA or Governing Body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of General Policy on Charging... This Policy Statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.... Parents need to know how the charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the costs (or even get it free).

A summary of this information must be included in the prospectus published by the school'.

'if a charge is made for each pupil, **this should not exceed the actual costs**. If further funds need to be raised... this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising'