

Ponteland Community Middle School



Charging & Remission

Ponteland Community Middle School
Charging and Remission Policy

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Introduction

The Governing Body acknowledges the right of every student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

The governors also recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education and aim 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.

a) The Legal Position

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. The general principle that no charge can be made for education in school hours (excluding the midday break) in maintained schools was first set out in the Education Reform Act 1988. Guidance came in the Circular 2/89, Education Reform Act 1988: Charges for School Activities.

The Circular explains that:

No charge can be made for any books, materials, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- within school hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out-of-school hours;
- for statutory religious education; and
- for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school.

However it is widely accepted that schools rely on parents contributions voluntarily to support activities and transport where the event could only take place with the parents kind support.

b) Admission

No charge can be made in connection with admission to a maintained school

c) Finished products

Where children work on a finished product made at school (e.g. in art and design technology) a charge can be made the time of admission to school. The parents must know the charge in advance and contribute, pro rata, accordingly.

d) Board and lodging

A charge can be made for board and lodging on residential educational visits/activities, but parents who qualify for prescribed benefits and allowances are entitled to ask if a remission of the charges is available.

Guidance on how to check the eligibility (for remission of charges) of children whose families receive tax credits can be accessed via the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk

e) Transport

Transport to and from home to any activity not provided by, but permitted by, the school, can be charged for.

f) Voluntary contributions

Parents may volunteer to pay for any educational activity. The school may request voluntary contributions for any visits/activities both inside and outside school time. However, no pupil may be excluded from the activity for not having paid the contribution. The Headteacher and governing body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours; e.g. swimming and music
- school equipment;
- transport to activities e.g. residential or sports.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then regretfully the activity will be cancelled.

g) Permitted charges

The following are permitted charges:

- charges for board and lodging on trips;
- costs of lost and destroyed school property and breakages;
- any costs associated with music tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school hours including vocal tuition.
- If pupils make use of an instrument provided by the Local Authority, a charge may be made in respect of the maintenance of the instrument in accordance with the published scale of charges.
- the cost of optional extras provided outside school hours (or mainly outside school hours), but the charge must not exceed the cost of the provision, and parents must agree to their child receiving the optional extra;
- the cost of entering a pupil for a public examination not prescribed in regulations, and the cost for preparing the pupil for such an examination out of school hours.

In all cases where a permitted charge is likely to be made the parents must be told the amount in advance.

The Governors Charging Policy

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

a) Practical subjects

- Where parents are invited to contribute to finished products costs in Art, Food Textiles and Design Technology the charge shall not exceed the cost of the materials used by the student.

b) Residential Trips

- The board and lodging element of approved residential activities deemed to take place in school hours. The cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision and prior written confirmation from the parent is required that he/she is willing to pay the charge.

c) Activities outside School Hours

- The full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours and therefore not part of but complimenting the National Curriculum.

Voluntary Contributions

The governing body reserves the right to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours
- school equipment
- school funds generally

Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions. Parents will be invited in confidence for the remission charges in full or in part; or phased payments.

Remissions

Parents of pupils who are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having free school meals entitlement, maybe supported with a remission of charges:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child tax Credit provided the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16,190
- Guaranteed State Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part.

The Head in consultation with the Chair of Governors will make authorisation for such remission.

School Uniform will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

Equal Opportunities

The Head will ensure that the school's equal opportunities policies are observed in implementing the policy.

Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for making and reviewing the policy.

The Head (or Business Manager) is responsible for the implementation of the policy and ensuring that staff, parents and pupils know the details as appropriate.

Other staff may be responsible for implementing the policy as part of their overall responsibilities (e.g. the Educational Visits Coordinator or Heads of Department).

Monitoring and Review

The Business manager will report on the policy to the Head as appropriate.

The Head will report to the governors' resources committee on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.