



Alexander Hosea Primary School

'Roots to grow, wings to fly'

Charging & Remissions policy – August 2023

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

This policy has been screened to ensure that we give 'due consideration' to equality of opportunity and has been agreed and formally approved by the appropriate reviewing and ratification Committee.

Author	Tara Price	Date reviewed	August 2023
Position	School business manager	Date ratified	Sep 2023
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EIA approved by	Premises & Finance	Reviewing committee	Premises & Finance

EIA = due consideration of potential adverse impacts on the following groups: age; disability; gender and gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; racial groups; religion or belief; sexual orientation

Vision

All education during school hours is free. Alexander Hosea School does not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the school curriculum. We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular), independent of their parents' / carers' financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

SECTION (1) CHARGES

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. Optional extras are:

(a) 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; or
- part of religious education.

(b) Residential trips – board and lodging

The school can charge for board and lodging on residential visits. The charge must not exceed the cost. Further details are set out in "Section (2) Residential Visits" below.

(c) Extended day services offered to pupils

No charge is made for activities that are outside of school hours if they are part of the curriculum. However, charges can be made for extra-curricular activities run outside of school hours, including the cost of materials, equipment, instruments or books.

(d) Examination entry fee

A charge can be made for the entry fee for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has not been prepared for it at the school.

(e) Transport

A charge can be made for transport costs provided it does not fall into any of the four categories as set out under “Section (5) Prohibition of Charges” below.

(f) Music tuition

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. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

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(1) of the Children Act 1989).

(g) Damage/loss to property

In cases of wilful or malicious damage to equipment or breakages, or loss of school books on loan to children, the school’s Head teacher, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body may decide to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

Notes

Any charges made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating i.e. there will be no element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in an optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional activity where charges will be made.

SECTION (2) RESIDENTIAL VISITS

Schools are not allowed to charge for:

- education taking place on the visit which takes place within school hours;
- education taking place on the visit which takes place outside of school hours which is part of the national curriculum;
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

Schools can charge for:

- board and lodging (but the charge must not exceed the cost)

SECTION (3) REMISSIONS

(a) Charging for activities other than residential visits

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances, for example those with children eligible for pupil premium grant funding.

(b) Residential visits

Parents who can prove that they are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if your household income is less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Since April 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria.

SECTION (4) 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, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset.

The governing body or head teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. The school will not exclude any child from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, and the school cannot fund it from some other source, it will be cancelled.

We will ensure we make this clear to parents from the outset. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, we will make every effort to ensure that their child has an equal chance to go on the visit. This would involve helping them to find alternative sources of funding.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, we will not make parents feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. We will not send colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates will not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

Any voluntary contributions requested in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating i.e. there will be no element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to make the full contribution.

The responsibility of determining the level of voluntary contributions is delegated to the Head teacher.

Parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the following:

- (a) Travel, insurance and entrance fees for day visits
- (b) Residential visits during school time (other than where pupil's board and lodgings is chargeable – see "Section (2) Residential Visits" above)
- (c) Theatre, music groups and artists invited to perform in school or provide class workshops
- (d) Swimming lessons

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection

SECTION (5) PROHIBITION OF CHARGES

The governing body of the school recognises that legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- an admission application to any state funded school - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
 - education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
 - education provided outside school hours if it is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage or 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;
 - instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
 - entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school;
- and

- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.
- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours, although a voluntary contribution can be requested
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage or 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 a residential trip.
- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit, although a voluntary contribution can be requested

Conclusion

All charges and remissions are carefully monitored by the School Business Manager and Head teacher.

References

The policy has been informed by the Department for Education document “Charging for school activities” (May 2018).