

Emerson Park Academy



CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

Reviewed: October 2022

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Introduction

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 has brought about changes to the charging possibilities in respect of music tuition. The Act has not changed any other legal basis for the levying of charges or voluntary contributions for school activities.

The Board of Directors may not levy charges to pupils or their parents/carers unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy on charging. The basis on which charges are made needs to be made clear to parents/carers as should the eligibility criteria for support. Parents/carers have a right to ask for this information and it is commended that it is included in the school's prospectus. Charges/voluntary contributions should not exceed the actual cost of the activity. For example, it is not permissible to charge more than the actual cost per pupil to cover any cases that are remitted or to allow for non-payment of voluntary contributions.

It is permissible to include any staffing costs associated with specific activities should teachers have a separate contract to provide optional extras. In other words, only the additional costs falling to the school may be included and not the usual teaching time experienced by the pupils.

Admissions

No charge/voluntary contribution may be levied as part of the admissions process.

Education during School Hours

No charges can be made in respect of school activities that take place largely during the school day save in respect of music tuition (see below) and this includes the costs of materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours to carry pupils to activities. Please note that school time does not include lunchtime.

Music Tuition

The provision of music tuition is the exception to the rule that charges may not be made for activities taking place during the school day and this now includes vocal as well as instrumental tuition. The new charging regulations allow for charging for individual tuition or any group size and also allow charging for vocal tuition subject to the parent/carer requesting the tuition. Charges can not be made in respect of looked after children. The new regulations however do not cover lessons that take place outside of school hours, at weekends or during school holidays. This also applies to looked after children.

Previously charges could only be made for groups of up to four. A number of instrumental learning activities make little sense in groups of four or less and moving too soon from a whole class instrumental experience to a small group or individual one may not always be appropriate. Freeing up the group size for which charges may be made will allow instrumental and vocal tuition teachers to make sensible choices about group size based on sound educational principles taking full account of health and safety issues:

- a blanket approach to music tuition is unlikely to work satisfactorily as it may be perfectly possible to teach one instrument in a group of 15 but not others
- a short lesson may also work well for some instruments but not for others
- group size can depend on many factors
 - the type of instrument
 - the level the pupils are at
 - room size

- noise levels
- appropriate staffing levels

Similar issues apply to specialist vocal tuition.

Charges should not result in 'profit' and must only cover the actual costs. It is not permissible therefore to levy charges to cover the cost of any remissions.

Voluntary Contributions

Although schools may not charge for school time activities apart from music tuition as above, they can invite parents to make voluntary contributions. It must be made clear though that payment is purely on a voluntary basis and that the children of those who do not pay will not be treated any differently to those that do. Where there is a shortfall in money received relative to the cost of the activity the school will have to decide on whether to make up the shortfall from their delegated budget and/or other school funds or cancel the proposed activity.

Education Outside School Hours

Charges can only be levied if the activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or syllabus for an approved examination or religious education. Sometimes activities overlap the school day-if most of the time occurs during the school day then the activity is deemed to have taken place entirely during the school day and no charge may be made. Again, voluntary contributions will be permissible as described above.

Residential Activities

No charges may be made for those activities taking place largely during school time nor can they be made for activities required for the syllabus for a public examination or are to do with the National Curriculum or religious education. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances except for pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Schools may request voluntary contributions as above.

Public Examinations

No charges may be made but an examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- The examination is on the set list but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school
- The examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it
- A pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in regulations.

Charges for any of the above must not exceed the actual cost of the activity. For example it is not allowable to charge an administration fee.

POLICY ON CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

Introduction

There are no funds held centrally to cover any costs arising from school charging and remission policies. This model therefore is guidance based on previous guidance amended as a result of the

new regulations for music tuition.

Music Tuition (Instrumental and Vocal)

A charge will be made for both individual and group tuition regardless of group size subject to the following exceptions:

- no charge will be made for looked after children
- no charge will be made for music tuition that takes place as part of the National Curriculum

These exemptions do not apply for tuition outside of the school day, weekends and during school holidays.

Where charges are to be made it will include all teaching costs and the cost of sheet music and any other relevant items such as the hire and insurance of musical instruments. The charges must not result in a 'profit' for the school or be made at a level to cover a loss of income due to the above exemptions and the remissions as below.

Charges will be remitted in full for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or for whom the school receives a pupil premium payment. This full remission extends to those pupils already receiving free tuition but who could be charged for under the new arrangements. It is essential that such pupils are not disadvantaged by the new arrangements and instead of charging, parents/carers will be asked to make a voluntary contribution* based on the actual costs of tuition.

Board and Lodging

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home the school will make a charge to cover board and lodging costs whether or not the residential trip is deemed to have taken place in school hours. ** Full remission will be made for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or for whom the school receives a pupil premium payment.

Costs of Residential Visits

Charges will only be made for the costs if they are largely out of school time and are not required by the National Curriculum, the syllabus for a public examination or for statutory religious education purposes. However, parents/carers may be asked to make voluntary contributions* based on the actual costs of the visits.

Charging for Finished Products

A charge may be levied to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents/carers have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

Public Examinations

Charges will be levied as follows:

- the examination is on the set list but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school
- the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it
- a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

A charge will also be made for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in regulations.

A charge may also be made if a parent requests an examination result to be remarked.

Non-residential Visits

Charges will be levied where the activities are provided wholly or mainly outside of school hours** and where they are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or syllabus for an approved examination or religious education. The charges will include

- travel cost
- materials, books, instruments, and any other equipment
- any additional staff costs
- entrance fees to facilities
- insurance costs

* Although schools may not charge for school time activities apart from music tuition as above, they can invite parents to make voluntary contributions. It must be made clear though that payment is purely on a voluntary basis and that the children of those who do not pay will not be treated any differently to those that do.

** The following examples may assist schools in determining if a trip is either largely in or out of school time:

Pupils are away from school from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as nine half days and includes five school sessions and therefore the trip is deemed to have taken place in school time.

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This equates to seven half days including 3 school sessions and is therefore deemed to have taken place outside school time.

The above calculations takes into account regulations that require school days to be divided into two sessions. A half day means any period of twelve hours ending with noon or midnight on any day. Therefore, even though the above trips continued well into the evening on the day of return they do not contain more than two sessions.