



COLLINGWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Charging Policy

Charging and Remissions Policy

Introduction

It is the policy of the school to enrich the children's learning through a variety of educational visits, visitors who share their expertise and practical, first-hand activities. Children learn best when they are able to experience something for themselves and they often remember these occasions long afterwards!

In order to facilitate these activities, it has been standard practice for parents to be asked to contribute towards any extra expense incurred. Without parental contributions, many of the valuable visits and activities would have to cease. The regulations on charging, as stated in the Education Reform Act 1996, provide guidelines as to when and how schools may charge for school-based activities. This policy clarifies how we currently implement these.

Specific Activities During School Hours

Music

All children participate in class music lessons. However, we are able to offer a limited number of places for specialist instrumental music tuition. For individual lessons the Act allows schools to recoup the full charge although the school currently provides a subsidy, budget permitting. However for larger group lessons, parental contributions to the total cost are still required in order that the activity can continue. Information about the current charge is made available when a place is offered for the next child on the waiting list.

Swimming

We have limited use of the swimming pool at South Woodham Ferrers Leisure Centre. To meet the additional costs of hiring the pool, tuition and travel, parental contributions are required.

Non-Residential Visits and Visiting Experts

Parents will be informed of the nature of the activity and will be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards its cost. This must be a reasonable length of time before the event allowing for it to be cancelled should there be too big a shortfall. This would be sufficient to cover the full cost of the activity when shared equally between all the children. Provided parents are willing to make these contributions, the activity will be confirmed and planning will proceed. No child will be excluded on the basis of unwillingness to pay, but should such a situation occur, the activity may well be cancelled and similar future events put at risk.

In recognition of the need for parents to manage their family budgets, we put a ceiling on the total cost for out of school educational visits. Following a review in March 2004, the amount per child, per school year, has been set at £20.00 with effect from September 2004. This is a maximum and we will always endeavour to restrict expenditure to a reasonable minimum.

Occasionally there are opportunities for children to experience live performances from theatre groups, story tellers or musicians. Sometimes the fees are paid wholly or in part by the Parents' Association (FOCUS), sometimes from the school budget or school fund. However on occasions, parental contributions are needed if such activities are to go ahead.

Residential Visits

The educational and social benefits of such visits are highly valued by the school. The procedures will be as follows:

1. Parents are invited to a meeting to discuss the plans, including the provisional cost, and will be asked whether they would like the visit to proceed.
2. A deposit to indicate positive commitment will be requested. If there are sufficient children wanting to go, the booking will be confirmed. In the event of there not being sufficient children to make the visit viable, the booking will be cancelled.
3. Parents will be told how to make payments, either in installments or in full. In cases of particular hardship we will discuss, in confidence, ways in which we may be able to support the family concerned.

In order that residential visits can continue, the cost to the parent will include board and lodging (for which a full charge can be levied), as well as travel, adult supervision, insurance and other incidental expenses which, according to the Act, need to be met by a voluntary contribution. A breakdown of costs per child should be available for parents on request. Should any parents wish their child to participate, but are unwilling to pay the necessary contribution, the Finance Committee of the Governing Body will decide whether the visit is to proceed or not.

Any residential visit organised out of school hours, will be financed on the basis of charging the full cost of the visit, covering travel, board and lodging, adult supervision, insurance and all other incidental costs. Only those prepared to accept the full cost will be entitled to participate.

Consumable Materials

If it becomes necessary to recoup expenses for such activities such as cooking, design technology or craft work, parents will be informed that a charge will be levied if they wish to own the end product. No child will be excluded from such activities through non-payment, but may not be able to take the product home.

Out of School Activities

Clubs

No charge for adult time will be levied for out of school clubs, organised and run by teaching staff. If the activity involves specialist equipment or resources, a cost to the parents may be required.

Where visiting experts or sports coaches run clubs on school premises, a fee may be charged.

Visits

Any visits or activities taking place wholly or mainly out of school hours, will be subject to a charge to recover any costs for travel, insurance or other incidental costs.