



**Rise Academy**  
Fountain Road  
Hull  
HU2 0LH  
t: 01482 226 166  
e: [admin@riseacademyhull.co.uk](mailto:admin@riseacademyhull.co.uk)  
[www.riseacademyhull.co.uk](http://www.riseacademyhull.co.uk)

# **CHARGING POLICY**

## **2017/2018**

Date Reviewed  
September 2017

Next Review Date  
September 2018

Rediscovering potential, rebuilding futures



# RISE ACADEMY POLICY ON CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

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## CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

### Introduction

The Management Committee wish to make the school's programme of visits and activities available to as many pupils as possible. They endorse the principle that no pupils should have access to the curriculum limited by charges but recognise they have to operate within the constraints of the school budget.

Any charges made by the school for educational activities must meet the requirements of the 1996 Education Act.

### Education

The Management Committee will not charge for:

- an admission application to the school;
- 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 National Curriculum<sup>1</sup>, 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;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of 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;
- 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<sup>2</sup>.

The school can however charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4).

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that 'part of the National Curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum 'inclusion statement' (e.g. developing teamwork skills).

<sup>2</sup> However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents.

## Optional Extras

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:**

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - a) part of the National Curriculum;
  - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
  - c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity 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 will not include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra 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 extra where charges will be made.

### **Voluntary Contributions**

The school will from time to time ask for voluntary contributions for school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions then the school will make this known from the start. The School will also make it clear that parents are under no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child will be excluded 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, then it may be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The school will ensure that parents are aware from the outset of the mechanism for allocating places for the visit.

When making requests for voluntary contributions parents should not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**.

### **Residential Visits**

The school will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of 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; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

The school may charge for:

- board and lodging however the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received

and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,010 (Financial Year 20013/14);

- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Guidance on school policies for Learning Outside the Classroom, including charging is available here.<sup>3</sup>

### **Music Tuition**

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

### **Transport**

The school will not charge for:

- 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 Management Committee or local education 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.

### **Charging and Remissions Policies**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lotc.org.uk/pdf/1.3.2%20Developing%20a%20LoTc%20policy.pdf>

The school will give details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for, and a remissions policy.

A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents will be informed how the charge has been worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free).

### **Education partly during school hours**

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge will only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

### **Non-residential activities**

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

### **Residential visits**

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

#### **Example 1: Visit during school hours**

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

#### **Example 2: Visit outside school hours**

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

### **Vandalism**

Where a student commits an act of vandalism against school property, (building or contents), parents will be issued with an invoice for the actual cost of the repair/replacement. Contributions will be requested from parents who fall into the category of receiving any of the benefits mentioned on page 3 / 4.

### **Photocopying Charges**

Personal photocopying is discouraged however if necessary should be charged at:

A4 - 5p for black and white and 10p for colour

A3 – 10p for black and white and 15p for colour

### **Telephone Charges**

Where staff make private telephone calls, they will be charged in accordance with the following unless they are work related:-

Local calls	Free
Long-distance calls	Actual cost (if cumulative total in quarter more than £1.00)
Calls to mobiles	Actual cost (if cumulative total in quarter more than £1.00)

### **Commissioned Places at Rise Academy**

The local Authority pays the Unit £10,000 for each of the 50 places at Rise Academy.

The Local Authority then commissions places at a cost of £9,100 per place.

Other places are sold to schools and Local Authorities at a cost of £9,000

### **Community Use charges**

The school currently does not have any community use during the holidays or after school. If it was decided to allow the community to use the school on an evening then these would be charged dependant on their requirements. The school is occupied throughout the holiday periods by smart moves staff and therefore use by the community during the holiday periods would be very limited.



## **Questions and Answers**

### **Q What is a charging policy?**

**A** Under the charging provisions set out in legislation, governing bodies and local authorities of maintained schools may choose to charge for certain defined activities, but only if they have first drawn-up charging and remissions policies. These policies should be made available to parents on request.

### **Q A visit involving staying overnight has been arranged for children at my school. Can the school charge for this?**

**A** Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home the school is allowed to make a charge for board and lodging. This is with the exception of pupils whose parents are receiving: Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £15,910 FY 13/14) and an income related employment and support allowance. 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. The head teacher must inform all parents of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving these benefits.

### **Q. With regard to the remission of board & lodging payments, can you please explain who pays for the expense, would it come out of the school budget or is there a grant available to claim?**

**A** Although the criteria for being eligible for the remission of charges for board and lodgings is the same as free school meals, that is where the similarity ends. The costs involved in the remission of board and lodgings are to be borne by the school from their contingency funds. There is no return to be completed to re-claim the money back.

### **Q Our school has a large number of pupils eligible for free school meals, this means that they would also receive remission for board and lodgings expenses for residential school visits. How can the school fund/organize residential visits?**

**A** The government provides funding for schools to each local authority according to a formula which recognises the different needs of each area. The same basic funding is provided for all comparable pupils across the country. This is then topped up according to local needs.

One of these top-ups reflects the numbers of pupils in a certain area living in deprived circumstances, as these pupils need extra help if they are to have an equal opportunity in life. The amount that individual schools receive from the local authority reflects their relative need compared with other local schools, through the locally agreed funding formula. All local authorities' funding formulae are required to include an element to reflect the needs of deprived

pupils. It is for head teachers and school governing bodies to decide how to spend their available resources.

Schools cannot exclude children from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make, a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

If there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

**Q Can governing bodies charge for educating children in maintained schools?**

**A.** The local authority or governing body cannot charge for education that takes place in school hours. Nor can they charge for activities that take place outside school hours if these are part of the National Curriculum, necessary as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. They can charge for permitted 'optional extras', provided they have drawn up a statement of general policy on charging and given details of 'optional extras' they intend to charge for. The Management Committee's policy does not have to be the same as the local authority's policy, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

**Q Can a school charge for an activity that takes place out of school hours?**

This kind of activity is often referred to as an 'optional extra'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. See guidance on optional extras.

The actual charge for the optional extra cannot exceed the actual cost of the provision. Schools cannot and must not make a profit from charging for optional extras. Participation in any optional extra 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 extra where charges will be made.

**Q Can a school ask parents for voluntary contributions?**

**A** Schools may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. It should be remembered that education provided during school hours must be free. This includes materials, equipment, and transport

provided in school hours by the local authority or by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. Governing bodies should also clearly explain that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently, and that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

**Q The school has sent letters out to parents asking for contributions towards a school visit, do parents have to pay?**

**A** Head teachers or governing bodies may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

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

Children of parents who are unable, or unwilling, to contribute may not be discriminated against. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of the visit, or activity, and there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall, then the school should cancel the activity/visit. It would be advisable to make parents aware of a possible cancellation to the activity/visit if insufficient voluntary contributions are received from the outset.

**Q What happens if the school is not able to raise enough voluntary contributions to cover costs?**

**A** Where there are not enough voluntary contributions, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, for example school funds and/or fundraising activities, then it must be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions should be made clear in the information sent to parents.

**Q What if a parent is unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution? How does this affect their child(ren)?**

**A** The school cannot exclude a child from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

**Q What support can a school offer a parent/carers who has difficulty making a financial contribution?**

**A** Schools must ensure that parents in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £15,575 (Financial Year

2008/09). Some schools also have funds available to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. Parents should be encouraged to speak to the head teacher in order to establish if such funding arrangements exist.

No charge may be made if there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination. In addition, if the activity is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel for any pupil, not just those whose parents are in receipt of benefits.

**Q What about charges for transport during school hours?**

**A** Any transport provided by the school in school hours will be provided free of charge (though a voluntary contribution could be requested). Guidance on school travel and transport is available [here](#).

**Q Can the school charge for something like cooking ingredients or materials needed for a technology lesson?**

**A** The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

**Q Can the school charge entry fees for examinations?**

**A** 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; and
- a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where The Management Committee or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

**Q. Can a school make a charge to pay for the administration required as part of the admission process?**

**A.** Para 1.82 of the current School Admissions Code and para 1.93 of the revised School Admissions Code (which comes into force in February 2009) rules out practices that can lead to covert selection, such as asking parents for a financial contribution as a condition of entry. We are clear that schools cannot ask for a voluntary contribution as part of the admissions process and where this is found, we will not tolerate it. Legislation prevents maintained schools from charging fees for admission or for providing education during school hours.

**Q. Can a school ask for a direct debit to the school fund?**

A. No. A school may ask for voluntary contributions, as long as it is clear that they are voluntary, but we are clear that state education should be free and we have no intention of changing this policy. We will not tolerate this when it is brought to our notice. No contributions may be sought as part of the admissions process.

Date of next review:  
September 2017