

Appendix x

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

This policy forms part of the Financial Regulations Manual for Discovery Schools Academies Trust

The charging and remissions policies adopted by each local Advisory Board of Discovery Schools Academies Trust ensures that statutory requirements are met and is intended to reflect the general principles of the Education Act which identifies activities for which:

- Charges will not be made
- Charges will be made
- Charges may be waived

Voluntary contributions

Advisory Boards recognise the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including educational visits and residential experiences, can make towards the pupils' personal and social education and therefore encourages such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Educational and residential trips need to be funded by voluntary contributions from parents which will include both the teacher/helper costs and a contingency fund which, if unused, will be returned to parents after the visit. No children will be excluded from participating in an activity which the school has organised because of unwillingness or inability to pay by their parents. The school is always happy to discuss payment arrangements especially for those people who are receiving family credit or income support. ***However, parents should be aware that some activities may not go ahead if costs cannot be met by voluntary contributions.***

There will be a different charging procedure regarding activities which are deemed outside school hours and this will be made clear at the time, if and when these activities are planned.

The school will always seek to achieve "best value principles" for the all the activities in school such as seeking three quotes before deciding on which transport company is to be used. All staff are conscious of rising costs of education and family budgets and will always try to attempt to keep costs to a minimum.

Advisory Boards also reserve the right to charge for:

- Damage to fixtures and fittings and loss or damage to equipment, including books
- The cost of materials or ingredients for Art, Design and Technology and cookery when the products are taken home

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to academy activities, nor is there any restriction placed on the use which can be made of

such contributions, provided they are used for the purpose specified in the request for them. They could, for example, be used to subsidise pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out that:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.
- No child will be excluded from an activity because the parents are unable to pay.
- If insufficient contributions are raised the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.
- If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Swimming

Swimming lessons can only take place if they are funded by voluntary contributions. However, reduced contributions will be sought from parents who are in receipt of income support or family credit. The school organizes swimming lessons for all children in years 2 and 5. These lessons take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum.. We inform parents during the summer term when these lessons are to take place in the next academic year, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons as well as a description of their ability as well as contributions towards the cost.

Educational Day Visits

In order to support the school curriculum and give children opportunities to explore learning through practical means each year group will organise Educational Day visits. In order to achieve this, the school will ask parents for a voluntary donation of the cost of the trip to their child. Trips will be organised where similar or same activities cannot be achieved in school.

Residential visits

The school organises residential visits in school time to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we ask parents to make a voluntary contribution for the educational activities. However, we do make a charge to cover the costs of board, lodging and travel expenses. If parents are experiencing financial difficulty they are invited to write in confidence to the Headteacher. There are a range of payment plans that the school can organise.

Currently Year 6 take part in residential visits with outdoor and adventurous activities.

Music tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. Parents are given information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year. There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. The peripatetic music teacher teaches individual or small group lessons. She charges the pupils directly for her services. The current provision for peripatetic music lessons are for violin.

Uniform

As a school we ask parents to ensure children wear an agreed list of school uniform. We provide a provision for school uniform with logo through Marks & Spencers online service and we do accept that some parents might wish to purchase plain green jumpers.

Fundraising Events/Non school uniform days

When the school holds a fundraising event for charity or other, the beneficiary will be agreed in advance and reviewed with the school council. Non school uniform day and other dressing up activities to raise money are all voluntary. All donations are voluntary and children will not be prevented from joining in even they haven't made a donation.

Enrichment Activities

In order to enrich the children's experiences, various visits or activity days are organised related to specific topics. The costs of such events will be subsidised from the School Fund and a voluntary contribution from parents will be sought.

After School Activities

Charges may be levied for additional activities provided outside school hours which are organised by outside agencies. The school will only support these activities where it feels it will enhance a child's education and provide a fair value for money. The charging for these optional activities will be dependent upon the costs incurred and will be at the discretion of the Advisory Board, through the Head Teacher. The charge to any one pupil will not exceed the actual total cost of the activity. The Advisory Board reserve the right to subsidise specific activities that they feel will support school initiatives.

Education Provided Within Academy Hours

Education provided by any Academy for its registered pupils should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during academy hours, academy hours being those hours when an academy is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the pupil nor his or her parents or guardian may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during academy hours.

Education Provided Out of Academy Hours

Where education is provided out of academy hours, charging is permitted, except where the education is provided:

- a) to fulfil any requirements specified in the topic of study, or
- b) specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum, or
- c) to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.

Charging Policy

If a charge is made for each pupil it should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are needed for additional costs e.g. to help hardship cases this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.

School Meals

Parents will be charged for school meals at the current rate charged by School Food Support with the exception of those children receiving Free School Meals.

Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except, of course, those entitled to free school meals. However, if a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, we will continue to provide meals for the rest of that week. However, the outstanding debt must be settled by the following Monday morning and future meals for that week must be paid in advance before any further meals are provided. If the debt is not settled at the start of the following week, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the school will phone the parent to remind them to come to school with the money. Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch. If payment of the debt is not received by the following day, the Head teacher reserves the right to begin formal proceedings against parents to recover the debt and to ensure that parents are aware of their duty of care to provide food for their children at lunchtime.

Unpaid debts for children who have left the academy - a full debt letter will be sent to their home address in September. If the debt remains outstanding it will be taken to the Headteacher and recovery pursued via a small claims court.

Any change in policy requires the approval of the Advisory Board.