

**Bucks County Council &
Stone Church of England Combined School**



Charging and Remissions Policy for Educational Activities

Reviewed by	Resources Committee
Date	18 th March 2023
To be reviewed	18 th March 2024

Stone Church of England Combined School Governing Body

Charging and Remissions Policy for Educational Activities

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs and visits, can make towards a pupil's education. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

The relevant statutory provisions are contained in Chapter III of Pt VI of the Education Act 1996. This requires the Governing Body to determine and keep under review a Charging and Remissions Policy. Parents have a right to ask for this information and a summary must be included in the school prospectus. The school must also comply with the Buckinghamshire County Council Scheme for Financing Schools, Finance Section F7 Charges for Educational Activities.

There are two types of financial contributions for which parents can be asked in relation to educational activities:

- Voluntary contributions
- Permitted charges

They have different limitations as set out below.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority 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 should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should 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 is likely to be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. Schools should also ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents when requesting for contributions.

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution, nor is there any restriction on the way in which such contributions may be used. Thus, voluntary contributions may be used to subsidise pupils of lesser means and to pay the travel and accommodation costs of accompanying teachers.

Permitted Charges

Permitted charges are a direct request to cover certain costs involved with a school activity or visit. No charge can be made in respect of education provided during school hours (which excludes the midday break).

Furthermore, no charge can be made for any education provided outside of school hours if this forms part of the syllabus for a public exam, or as part of the National Curriculum or religious education (non-chargeable education). A charge may be made however for board and lodgings on any residential educational visit (subject to the provisions of the LA and school's remissions policy).

1. Materials & Textbooks

Where a pupil or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. In the case of Food Technology, pupils usually provide their own ingredients, but if the pupil forgets, the school provides the ingredients and levies a charge. Textbooks are provided free of charge, but in some subjects, additional revision guides are available, for which a charge is made.

2. 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 Education 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. Guidance about these changes to the charging regulations can be viewed [here](#). 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).

3. Residential Activities/Activities Outside School Hours

If the activity is held outside school hours and is education other than non-chargeable education, then it is regarded as an "optional extra". A charge may be made for the full cost of the activity but must not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity. The charge may include the costs of travel, board and lodgings, additional staff costs, entrance fees, insurance, materials and equipment. However, the charge made to individual parents cannot include any cost added to subsidise parents of children who are unwilling or unable to pay the charge.

When is an activity held in school hours?

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.

4. Examination Entries

A charge will be levied in respect of examination entries for pupils where the school has not prepared the pupil for the examination.

A charge will be levied in respect of examination entries for pupils where

- the school has prepared the pupil for the examination and
- it considers that for educational reasons the pupil should not be entered and
- the pupil's parent/guardian wishes the pupil to be entered (or pupil him/herself when over 18 years old).

In these circumstances, if the pupil subsequently passes the examination, the school may refund the cost.

A charge may be levied for pupils re-sitting an examination.

A charge will be levied where a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

5. Damage/Loss to Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

6. Lettings

The school will make its facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined annually by the Finance Committee and approved by the Governing Body.

7. Other charges

The Headteacher, Finance Committee or Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

8. Refunds

REFUNDING PLACES ON SCHOOL TRIPS

Where trips require a deposit, including residential trips, the deposit will be non-refundable if the trip is cancelled and the provider does not refund the deposit.

In the event that a student is no longer willing/able to take part in a school trip after payment has been made, the following procedure will be followed:

- If the school is able to fill the place with another student who wishes to take part, there will be a full refund.
- If the school is not able to fill the place with another student, the school will only be able to refund any monies that we are able to secure from the provider.

Places on residential trips are subject to maintaining good behaviour in school. In the event that a pupil may not attend a trip due to concerns regarding their behaviour the money paid will only be refunded if the school is able to fill the place with another pupil who wishes to take

part. If the school is not able to fill the place with another pupil, the school will refund all monies paid, with the exception of a non-refundable deposit.

In the event that a trip has to be cancelled and this falls outside the school's insurance cover (for example terrorist activity or COVID-19) the school will only refund any monies that we are able to secure from the provider.

COVID-19

At present no School Travel Insurer is willing to provide cover for cancellation of trips due to COVID-19 or any other Pandemic. It is essential that parents are made aware that no cover will exist if:

- a) Government restricts travel
- b) School decides to cancel a trip
- c) A Travel Provider cancels a trip
- d) A parent decides against letting a student travel.

Stone School will consider the above before booking any trips, particularly those with high costs or residential.

Remissions Policy

Where non-chargeable education is provided during a residential visit, parents in receipt of certain benefits (broadly equivalent to those which qualify pupils for Free School Meals) shall receive a remission of any charges that would otherwise be payable in respect of board or lodgings. A voluntary contribution will be requested for the remaining amount.

Government guidance providing details of the benefits which exempt parents from being charged can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>

Where charges are to be made by the governing body for optional extras, parents may receive a remission for the whole or part of the charge as set out in the school's remissions policy.

Additional information about charging for school activities (document 3.2c) can be found at:

<http://oeapng.info/>

Safeguarding Children & Child Protection

The school takes its duties regarding the safeguarding and well-being of children very seriously. Where a third party is responsible for the running of any service on the school premises, it is the third party's responsibility to ensure that all staff have had the necessary checks made on them to ensure their suitability for their employment/engagement. It is also the responsibility of the third party to have correct procedures in place for the reporting of any concerns that their members of staff may have eg Child Protection, Risk Assessment and Whistle Blowing. All copies of checks and Risk Assessments will be made available to the school before any engagement.

Equal Opportunities

This policy is underpinned by the Equal Opportunities policy for Stone Church of England Combined School, which is available on request. This policy will ensure that no child suffers from unfavourable treatment because of their parents' financial position.

The policy will be disseminated widely to all staff members, governors and parents and it will be reviewed every two years.

Approved by the Governing Body
at their meeting held on

Minute No.....

Signed..... Date.....

Next Annual Review Date: