

PLASHET SCHOOL



Working together to promote & celebrate achievement

Charging and Remission Policy

Revised and applicable from June 2017

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irene Papadopolou". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Statement of intent

Plashet School is committed to providing opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. All students at Plashet School will be invited to attend educational visits. Each visit or activity will be closely linked to the relevant curriculum objectives and will provide invaluable enrichment experiences. This policy outlines how we can ensure that all students are able to attend visits or activities, regardless of financial status.

1. General statement of policy

1.1 The Governing Body acknowledges the right of every student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

1.2 The governors also recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, visits and residential experiences can make towards students' education and aim to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the students and as additional optional activities.

1.3 Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Governing Body of Plashet School must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities. By law, school governing bodies, subject to the limitations provided in this document, cannot charge for education provided during school hours. Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions but if they are unable to contribute, their child should not be prevented from participating should the activity go ahead.

2. Legal position

2.1 Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Governing Body of Plashet School must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities. Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England.

2.2 School governing bodies and local authorities cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any state funded school - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply and use of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum¹, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent;
- entry for a prescribed public examination if the student has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school².

2.3 School governing bodies and local authorities can charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes her to own them;
- optional extras (see below);
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances;
- community facilities³

2.4 Charges may be made for some activities known as '**optional extras**'. Where an optional extra is 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:
 - part of the National Curriculum;
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school; or
 - part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examinations(s) at the school.
- transport (other than transport that is 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);
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit;
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

2.5 Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must 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. (A charge can include amounts relating to: materials, books, instruments or equipment, cost of accommodation, non-teaching staff, teaching staff and music tutors where the cost relates directly to the optional extra activity.)

2.6 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.

3. Voluntary contributions

3.1 There is nothing in the legislation that prevents a school governing body 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 Headteacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or Headteacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

3.2 It is important to note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, it will be cancelled. The school will ensure they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

4. Music tuition

4.1 Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

4.2 The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

4.3 Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

4.4 The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(I) of the Children Act 1989).

5. Transport

5.1 Schools **cannot** 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 governing body or local 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

6. Overview of activities & associated charging policy

As a result of the above guidance, the Governors have agreed the following charging policy:

6.1 Admissions – no charge shall be made in respect of admission.

6.2 Provision of education – no charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered students where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of normal school hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the curriculum. The school may charge persons who are not registered students at the school for education provided or for facilities used by them belonging to the school.

6.3 Musical Instrument tuition – When personal music tuition is requested by a parent/carer, a charge will be made. The tuition will be provided either individually or for a group of not more than four students provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent/carer. Tuition will be provided free of charge where it is considered to be an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination curriculum. Tuition will also be provided free of charge for any student who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(I) of the Children Act 1989).

6.4 Practical subject charge – The cost of ingredients or materials for practical subjects where the parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

6.5 Visits during the school day – A voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable, consideration will be given to cancellation.

6.6 Residential visits – Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip can be classified as optional. Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be made aware that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the school day, or is part of the national curriculum or is preparation for a public examination, only the cost of board and lodging can be passed on to parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost. (See **Education partly during school hours** below)

All parents will be informed of the right to claim a minimum of free board and lodging if they are receiving particular benefits (see Remissions section below). A voluntary contribution will be requested for the balance of the costs.

6.7 Optional extra visits – Visits that take place beyond the school day or as part of an extra-curricular activity can be charged and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.

6.8 Public examinations – No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered student at the school. Charges are applied for the entry of a student for an examination and/or re-sit for which he/she has not been prepared by the school.

6.9 Examination re-marks – If a parent requests a re-mark and the request is not supported by the school, the parent will be required to pay. If the re-mark subsequently results in an improved grade, the fee will be refunded to the parent.

6.10 Examination certificates – if a parent has been given the opportunity to confirm personal details for examination certificates but has failed to respond to the school to correct any errors, any subsequent correction and reprinting of examination certificates will be charged to the parent.

6.11 Breakages – The costs (full or partial, at the school's discretion) of breakages caused by students. A charge is unlikely to be made for accidental breakage unless the student was not heeding previously stated safety procedures. The recovery of the full cost of deliberate breakage or vandalism will be sought by the school. A charge will also apply for loss or damage to school property which is placed under the responsibility of the student including anything that may be taken off school premises.

7. Remission of charges

7.1 According to guidance correct as of December 2014, parents in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential trips deemed to take place during school hours:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers 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 that the family's income (as assessed by HMRC) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial year 2013/14)
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income-related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008

7.2 The school will follow the latest DfE guidance in the event that the above list of qualifying benefits changes.

7.3 The above list of benefits is in line with the eligibility for free school meals, therefore reference to the Free School Meals list will be made in order to validate claims.

7.4 If a student is entitled to free school meals when the trip takes place, a 50% rebate will be given.

7.5 The Governors have agreed that although legally the school is only required to provide remission for board and lodging for residential trips deemed to take place during school hours, a 50% remission of charges will be given to eligible families in relation to the full cost of any trip within school hours.

7.6 For high cost optional extra trips, such as residential trips abroad, it is highly unlikely that remission for charges can be provided as the school would be unable to subsidise the high cost of an individual place.

7.7 The Governors acknowledge that on occasion, a family may be experiencing short term financial difficulties but is not in receipt of Free School Meals. Families in this situation should contact the school if they are struggling to fund the cost of a trip and the school will review each case on its merits to decide if they are able to provide any financial assistance towards the costs.

8. Education partly during school hours

8.1 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 can 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 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

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.

¹ 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).

² 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.

³ The powers to provide community facilities are under s.27(1) of the Education Act