

Mount Charles Charging Policy

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The purpose of this guide is to set out the policy of the Children's Service Authority (CSA) on charging for various school activities. This policy is drawn up in accordance with the requirements of section 457 of the Education Act, 1996 as amended by section 200 of the Education Act 2002.

There are four principles underlying the provisions on charging:

- That education in schools should be free.
- That activities offered wholly or mainly during normal school teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- That there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education, but that CSA's and schools have the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- That CSA's and schools have the right to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.

The school recognises that there are a number of activities which will only take place if parental contributions are available but it stresses that no child should be excluded from any activity organised by the school because of the liability or unwillingness of their parents to pay such a contribution.

Optional visits wholly or mainly outside school hours

It is the intention of the school to charge the full cost of visits which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education. The cost could include travel, insurance, admission charges, meals and, if desired, a sum of money to enable some pupils to go on the visit without payment, or to cover teachers' travel costs, where a separate contract is issued.

Board and lodging charges on residential visits

It is the intention of the school to charge the full cost of board and lodging on visits taking place wholly or mainly during school hours, or if out of school hours, provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education.

The costs of transport, insurance, admission charges, etc. incurred during residential trips may not, however, be charged, although voluntary contributions may, of course, be requested and could become a necessary prerequisite for the visit taking place.

Individual tuition in the playing of a musical instrument

It is not the intention of the school to charge for such tuition where it is provided by school employed schools' staff, whether in or out of school hours. However where tuition or ensemble activities are provided by external agencies and peripatetic teachers a charge may be made to pupils concerned.

Charges for ingredients, materials and equipment

Schools must be prepared to provide any ingredients, materials, equipment needed for the delivery of the curriculum. Parents who are willing to contribute in cash, or in kind, can be encouraged to do so on a voluntary

basis. The school may charge for, or invite parents to supply, ingredients, materials and equipment if parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

Charges for breakages and fines

We may on occasions charge for damage.

Definitions

The most important definition concerns whether an activity takes places within, or out of, school hours.

If the number of school sessions missed by the pupils is less than 50% of the number of half days taken up by the activity, the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours. If the number of school sessions is 50% or more of the number of half days, the activity is deemed to take place during school hours.

Numbers of half days, or of school sessions, are to be rounded up as follows:

Where 6 or more hours in a half day is spent on a residential visit the whole of that half day counts as having been spent on the visit; where half or more of a school session is devoted to a residential visit the entire session counts as having been spent on the visit.