

LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON  
EDUCATION AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON  
CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- 1 . INTRODUCTION
  - 1.1 The Education Reform Act 1988 has resulted in changes to the law on charging for school activities which took effect from 1 April 1989 and which apply to all maintained schools.
  - 1.2 The basic principle underlying the Act is that education provided by any maintained school for its registered pupils should be free of charge if it takes place during school hours.
  - 1.3 Each Local Education Authority and Governing Body cannot levy a charge after 1 April 1989 unless they have drawn up a policy on charging.
  - 1.4 This pamphlet sets out the policy of the London Borough of Hillingdon, as the Local Education Authority, in respect of charging for school activities for registered pupils of maintained schools in the Authority.
  - 1.5 The Governing Body of every maintained school is required to provide information about their charging and remissions policies in their next school prospectus to be published after 1 September 1989. Details of school hours will also have to be published, under the Education (School Hours and Policies-Information) Regulations 1989, to enable parents to know which activities take place within school hours and which are outside school hours.
2. FREE EDUCATION
  - 2.1 Except in the case of board and lodging, no charge can be made where an activity is provided as a required part of
    - (a) a syllabus for a prescribed public examination, or
    - (b) the National Curriculum; or
    - (c) a syllabus in Religious Educationor where an activity takes place wholly or mainly during school hours (except in the case of individual tuition in playing a musical instrument).
- 3 . INDIVIDUAL TUITION IN PLAYING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT (NOT VOCAL TUITION)
  - 3.1 The Authority does not provide individual music tuition within school hours. However, it does provide individual music tuition outside school hours to young people who are members of the Hillingdon Music Centre.
  - 3.2 The Authority will continue making a charge for this tuition and the level of charge will be reviewed annually by the Education Committee.
  - 3.3 For a second child in the same family these charges are reduced by 33%. For additional children in the same family they are reduced by 66%. Charges will be remitted in full for children whose parents receive Family Credit, Income Support or an Invalidity Benefit.

4 • OPTIONAL EXTRAS

- 4.1 Optional extras are activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours and so a charge can be made. School hours do not include the mid-day break. The Authority has requested that every Governing Body publishes details of its school hours in its charging policy. This information also has to be published in the school prospectus.
- 4.2 A non-residential activity is deemed to take place outside school hours if 50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity occurs outside school hours.
- 4.3 In the case of a residential activity, if less than 50% of the half days taken up by the activity are school sessions, the activity is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.
- 4.4 Participation in an optional extra will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made. It will be for the Governing Body of the school to determine whether or not a charge is to be made for particular activities.
- 4.5 The cost may include an appropriate element for:
- (a) a pupil's travel cost;
  - (b) a pupil's board and lodging costs if the trip is residential;
  - (c) materials, books, instruments and other equipment;
  - (d) non-teaching costs;
  - (e) entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres etc;
  - (f) insurance costs;
  - (g) any costs of engaging teaching staff or instructors specifically for the purpose of providing the activity including the cost of travel and board and lodging.
- 4.6 Any charge made for individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity divided equally by the number of pupils taking part.
- 4.7 Parents should be notified in advance of the activity being provided, with details of the costs involved and how the charge has been calculated. Where a charge is made, only those pupils whose parents have agreed in writing to pay the charge will be allowed to participate in the activity, unless the Governing Body agree to remit the charges in whole or in part on the grounds of hardship in particular cases.
- 5.1 For activities taking place wholly or mainly during school hours, no charge can be made for the use of ingredients or materials by pupils in practical work, and parents cannot be required to supply ingredients or materials at their own expense.
- 5.2 It is for Governing bodies to determine whether parents should be required to pay for ingredients and/or materials in cases where parents have agreed in writing in advance that they would wish to own the finished product. The Governing Body may determine that there are circumstances in which parents will not be required to meet the full cost of the ingredients or materials for making that product, but the Education Reform Act permits a charge to be made if the parents keep the product.

6. BOARD AND LODGING

- 6.1 Where a school activity involves a pupil in spending nights away from home, a Governing Body is permitted to make a charge for the board and lodging provided that the charge does not exceed the actual cost of providing board and lodging for that pupil.
- 6.2 In circumstances where the Authority is responsible for making a charge, the full cost will normally be charged for each pupil.
- 6.3 Charges for board and lodging set either by a Governing Body or the Local Education Authority are subject to the policy on remissions set out in paragraph 9 below.

7 • PRESCRIBED PUBLIC EXMINATIONS

- 7.1 Each Governing body is required to enter pupils without charge for each prescribed public examination for which they have been prepared by the school, except where the Governing Body considers there are good educational reasons for not doing so, or where the pupil's parents have requested in writing that the pupil should not be entered.
- 7.2 The Governing Body must inform parents in writing as soon as practicable after deciding for which examinations a pupil should be entered so that parents have the opportunity to comment on the decisions. Governors may if they so wish delegate these responsibilities to the Headteacher.
- 7.3 It is for each Governing Body to determine what constitutes a 'good educational reason'. The Authority considers that the following constitute good educational reasons for not entering a pupil:
- (a) where a change of course would be advisable;
  - (b) where a less able pupil would not be able to cope with the full range of subject entries and would do better to concentrate on fewer subjects;
  - (c) where a pupil has failed to meet the minimum conditions for a recognised pass grade at the time when entries must be made.
- 7.4 Governing bodies are permitted to make a charge covering the cost of entering a pupil for:-
- (a) a prescribed public examination for which a pupil has not been prepared by the school;
  - (b) a public examination other than one on the prescribed list where the parent has agreed to such an entry;
  - (c) resits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school since the previous examination.
- 7.5 If a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the Governing Body has paid or is liable to pay, the Governing Body will seek to recover the fee from the parents. The Authority considers that absence through illness would normally be a good reason for such a failure; this may need to be substantiated by a medical certificate.

8 • DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

8.1 The Authority has advised Governing Bodies that where a pupil's behaviour results in damage to or loss of school property or equipment, the governors should seek to recover the cost of any replacement or repair from the parents.

9. REMISSIONS

9.1 For pupils whose parents are receiving Income Support or Family Credit, no charges can be made for board and lodging where the activity is deemed to take place in school hours or where (whether in or out of school hours) it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is a required part of the National Curriculum or of a Religious Education syllabus.

9.2 In addition, the Authority has determined that full remission of charges for board and lodging will also apply for those activities outlined in

9.1 above to parents in receipt of an Invalidity Benefit.

9.3 All parents must be made aware of these provisions in connection with each activity involving board and lodging so that they may inform the school of their circumstances if they are eligible for and wish to have remission of these charges.

9.4 The cost of these remissions may not be recovered by levying an additional charge on the parents of other pupils taking part.

9.5 Any other circumstances in which charges for board or lodging or any other charges might be remitted are a matter for the Governing Body or the Authority to determine, whichever is organising the activity and making the charges.

10. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH CHARGING IS NOT PERMISSIBLE

10.1 For those activities for which charges cannot be made under the 1988 Act, as explained in Section 2 of this Policy Statement, parents can be invited in writing to make voluntary contributions. In order to provide the widest range of educational activities for pupils at a school, Governing Bodies may seek voluntary contributions from parents as allowed under Section 118 of the Act, for the general benefit of the school or in support of any school activity whether during or outside school hours and whether residential or non-residential.

10.2 Any request for contributions from parents must state clearly that these are totally voluntary and parents are under no obligation to contribute. Parents must also be informed that all pupils in any group for whom an activity is proposed will be permitted to take part fully whether or not their parents make a voluntary contribution.

10.3 Parents may also be informed that if a sufficient sum in voluntary contributions is not received the planned activity may not be able to go ahead for any pupils because of the costs which would have to be met from school funds.

10.4 No voluntary contribution can be sought from a parent prior to a pupil's admission to a school since the pupil will not at that time be a registered pupil of the school.

11, COMPLAINTS

- 11.1 Any complaint made by a parent about a matter concerning charges or the remission of charges for schools activities will be dealt with through the Complaints Procedure established by the Authority and set out in a pamphlet entitled 'complaints Procedure (School Curriculum and Religious Worship)'. Copies of this are available free of charge on request from the school concerned or from the Assistant Education Officers' Section in the Civic Centre (telephone Uxbridge 50111, extension 2144).
- 11.2 The procedure begins with an informal meeting between the parent(s) and the Headteacher or a senior teacher at the school, at which it is hoped that most complaints or concerns can be resolved. Any parent wishing to query or complain about a matter of this kind is advised to contact the school by telephone or letter in the first instance to arrange such a meeting.

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