



CHARGES and REMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

The Steiner Academy Exeter is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:-

- participate fully in the school's curriculum;
- contribute to all aspects of school life;
- be a valued partner in the process of education.

These objectives of this policy must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside the school and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents/guardians who are on low income.

The school aims to

- make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income;
- encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school;
- respond to the wide variations in family income whilst not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

The development of a range of activities forms part of the school's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with a particular emphasis on the identification of specific resources to support such activities. It includes a number of key factors:-

- The cost of activities set against their educational value;
- How the activity will be paid for;
- The value of certain activities in relation to age/needs of pupils;
- The appropriate process for raising funding;
- An assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;
- An understanding of the various types of activities involved, e.g. education visits, music tuition, materials for practical work;
- An assessment of local facilities.

Legislation - Education During School Hours

The DfE in its guidance to school governors states that *"education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of "education" includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity."* It goes on to advise that *"although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)"*

When additional costs are incurred by the Academy to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. Activities which may incur additional cost are:-

- Educational Visits off site
- Visits to school by professionals e.g. authors, storytellers, musicians, artists etc.

Education outside school hours

The DfE in its guidance to school governors states that *“Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay.”*

The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as “optional extras”.

The Governing Body will support the Principal in agreeing to make charges for such “optional extra” activities which will be set by members of staff, in agreement with the Principal to cover the cost.

Residential Activity

The DfE in its guidance to school governors states that *“For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of the travel. However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils who are receiving Income Support or Family Credit. The Principal will tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits.”* A voluntary contribution will be requested by the school for such activities. The Academy will follow the relevant legislation as contained in the Education Reform Act 1988: Section 106 – 111, 117, and 118. The guidance is contained in the DCSF circular 2/89: Charges for School Activities.

Remissions Policy

To ensure that access to activities reflects intentions, the Steiner Academy Exeter will implement the following Remissions Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children. Local Authority legislation defines people in receipt of Housing Benefit and their dependants as living on the margins of poverty and this is agreed by the Governing Body of the Academy.

Children at the Steiner Academy Exeter whose families approach the Principal for support, are looked on favourably and personal circumstances are taken into account. Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals. This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting voluntary charges or dinner money, which do not identify children who do not contribute.

The school community will be encouraged to participate in fund raising efforts and to make a contribution towards the school’s funds.

Informing Parents/carers

The Steiner Academy Exeter will follow the DfE Guidelines on informing parents and a summary of this policy will be included in the school prospectus. A letter will be sent to parents giving them information about any proposed visit/activity which includes:-

- Details of the visit/activity
- Dates and times
- Expected dress code
- Proposed voluntary contribution (if applicable)
- Return slip to include a parental signature agreeing to the child taking part, contact and medical details (as appropriate)

Any charge that is made for each pupil will not exceed the actual cost.

Implementation

As a part of the process of budget building, planning is essential to developing a charging policy at the Steiner Academy Exeter which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the school.

Members of staff arranging such activities will consider:-

- the projected number of children
- cost per head
- breakdown of transportation costs
- entry fees
- discounts
- teacher costs

Such a process, however, should not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the school to take advantage of opportunities that arise during the course of the year. These will be implemented in a way which is consistent with the school's overall policy.

Photocopying

Any photocopying that is requested by parents relating to their child, under the 'Freedom of Information Act', will be charged at **10p per sheet**.

Private fees

Any report or data that is requested on a child for the purpose of a third party private assessment requested by a parent (eg. private psychologist reports or solicitor reports) will be charged at an agreed rate by the Principal in discussion with the Chairman or Vice-chair of Governors. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information (not less than £10 per hour) as well as photocopying charges (not less than 10p per sheet) and postage.

Approved by (Print name):	
Signature:	Date
Review Date* (annual review required):	
Designated staff member:	
Designated governor:	

*Review frequency: Governing body free to determine

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/2255/contents/made>