



Empowering our unique schools to Excel

Charging and Remissions Policy

	ODBST 1.0	
Policy Level:	1	<u>ODBST Trustee Policy</u> Owned and applicable at ODBST Board level
	2	<u>ODBST Statutory and Mandatory Policy</u> All schools must adopt these policies with local amendment strongly discouraged. These policies are centrally amended and binding on LGBs from the date of Board approval. They must be displayed on the School's website. Approval for all proposed local amendments must be sought from the ODBST Governance Lead prior to Local Governing Body resolution.
Other related ODBST policies and procedures:		
Committee responsible:	FRAPP	
Approved by:	FRAPP	
Date Approved:	6th July 2022	
Date for Next Review:	July 2025	

Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) schools recognise the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities, including clubs and visits, can make towards a pupil's education. Each school's Local Governing Board 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 Local Governing Board 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 / on the school website.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Local Governing Board

The Local Governing Board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the Headteacher. The Local Governing Board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

Staff

Our staff are responsible for:

- ☑ Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- ☑ Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

CHARGING POLICY

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

1. Voluntary contributions
2. Permitted charges

They have different limitations as set out below.

Voluntary Contributions:

Nothing in legislation prevents a school 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 Local Governing Board or Headteacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The Local Governing Board or Headteacher 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 her or his parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must 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.

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 school's remissions policy – see below).

1. Materials & Textbooks

Where a pupil or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, cookery or design and technology, a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. Textbooks are provided free of charge, but in some subjects, additional revision guides are available, for which a charge is sometimes 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. 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 pupils.

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. 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.

5. 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 Local Governing Board.

6. Other charges

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

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 complete remission of any charges that would otherwise be payable in respect of board or lodgings.

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers 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 the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008 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>

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

<http://oeapng.info/>