



CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This Policy sets out arrangements for the charging and remission of those charges for school activities within Discovery Schools Academies Trust. The Policy applies to all academies within the Trust.

Discovery reserves the right to review, revise, amend, withdraw or replace the contents of this policy on providing reasonable notice of any such changes.

The charging and remissions policies adopted by each Advisory board of Discovery ensure that statutory requirements are met and is intended to reflect the general principles of the Education Act which identifies activities for which:

1. Charges will not be made
2. Charges will be made
3. Charges may be waived

Voluntary contributions

Advisory Boards recognise the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including educational visits and residential experiences, can make towards the pupils' personal and social education and therefore encourage such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Educational and residential trips need to be funded by voluntary contributions from parents/carers which will include both the teacher/helper costs and a contingency fund which, if unused, will be returned to parents/carers after the visit. No children will be excluded from participating in an activity which the school has organised because of unwillingness or inability to pay by their parents/carers. The school is always happy to discuss payment arrangements, especially for those people who are receiving family Universal Credit. ***However, parents/carers should be aware that some activities may not go ahead if costs cannot be met by voluntary contributions.***

There will be a different charging procedure regarding activities which are deemed outside school hours, and this will be made clear at the time, if and when these activities are planned.

The school will always seek to achieve "best value principles" for the all the activities in school such as seeking three quotes before deciding on which transport company is to be used. All staff are conscious of the rising costs of education and family budgets and will always try to attempt to keep costs to a minimum.

Governors also reserve the right to charge for:

- Damage to fixtures and fittings and loss or damage to equipment, including books
- The cost of materials or ingredients for Art, Design and Technology and cookery when the products are taken home

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents/carers or others can make to school activities, nor is there any restriction placed on the use which can be made of such contributions, provided they are used for the purpose specified in the request for them.

They could, for example, be used to subsidise pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers.

The Law says that:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents/carers will be notified of this from the outset.
- No child will be excluded from an activity because the parents/carers are unable to pay.
- If insufficient contributions are raised the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.
- If a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Swimming

Swimming lessons can only take place if they are funded by voluntary contributions. However, reduced contributions will be sought from parents/carers who are in receipt of Universal Credit. The school organises swimming lessons for all children in year 3, 4 and 5 and for those who cannot swim 25m in year 6. These lessons take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. Due to the distance from the local swimming pools, we are forced to ask for a contribution. We inform parents/carers during the summer term when these lessons are to take place in the next academic year, and we ask parents/carers for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons as well as a description of their ability.

Educational Day Visits

In order to support the school curriculum and give children opportunities to explore learning through practical means each year group will organise Educational Day visits. In order to achieve this, the school will ask parents/carers for a voluntary donation of the cost of the trip to their child. Trips will be organised where similar or same activities cannot be achieved in school.

Residential visits

Where the school organises residential visits in school time to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution for the educational activities. However, we do make a charge to cover the costs of board, lodging and travel expenses. If parents/carers are experiencing financial difficulty, they are invited to write in confidence to the Headteacher. There are a range of payment plans that the school can organise.

Music tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. Parents/carers are given information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year. There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. The peripatetic music teachers teach individual or small group lessons. We make a charge for these lessons based on the number of children involved in the lesson. All payments for lessons will be sorted in advance of the term's lessons. If parents/carers are experiencing financial difficulty, they are invited to write in confidence to the Headteacher. There are a range of payment plans that the school can organise.

Uniform

As a school we ask parents/carers to wear an agreed list of school uniform. We do not expect all school uniform to be bought from school. The processes for purchasing school uniform from a range of companies follows the school "Best Value" systems.

Fundraising Events/ Non-school uniform days

When the school holds a fundraising event for charity or other agreed aim, the beneficiary will be agreed in advance and reviewed with the school council. Non-school uniform day and other dressing up activities to raise money are all voluntary. All donations are voluntary, and children will not be prevented from joining in even they haven't donated.

Enrichment Activities

In order to enrich the children's experiences, various visits or activity days are organised related to specific topics. The costs of such events will be subsidised by school funds and a voluntary contribution from parents/carers will be sought.

After School Activities

Charges may be levied for additional activities provided outside school hours and are organised by outside agencies. The school will only support these activities where it feels it will enhance a child's education and provide fair value for money. The charging for these optional activities will be dependent upon the costs incurred and will be at the discretion of the Advisory Board, through the Headteacher. The charge to any one pupil will not exceed the actual total cost of the activity. The Advisory board reserves the right to subsidise specific activities that they feel will support school initiatives.

Education Provided Within School Hours

Education provided by any school for its registered pupils should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, school hours being those hours when a school is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the pupil nor his or her parents or guardian may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours.

Education Provided Out of School Hours

Where education is provided out of school hours, charging is permitted, except where the education is provided:

- a) to fulfil any requirements specified in the topic of study, or
- b) specifically, to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum:
- c) to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.

Charging Policy

If a charge is made for each pupil it should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are needed for additional costs e.g. to help with hardship cases this must be through voluntary contributions or general fund raising.

School Meals

Parents/carers will be charged for school meals at the current rate charged by the schools catering provider with the exception of those children receiving Free School Meals.

A separate policy for the management of Dinner Money Debt has been produced – see Dinner Money Debt Management Policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be approved as part of the financial regulations by the Trust Board.