

Highters Heath Community School



Charging & Remissions Policy

Highters Heath Community School 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 curriculum
- contribute to all aspects of school life, and
- be a valued partner in the process of education

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside 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.

We aim:

- to make school activities accessible to all students regardless of family income
- to encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum
- to provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school and
- to respond to the wide variations in family income while 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:

- value of certain activities in relation to age/needs of pupils
- cost of an activity set against its education value
- how the activity will be paid for
- an assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way
- an understanding of the various types of activities involved eg educational visits, theatre groups
- reference to additional or hidden costs eg lunch or pocket money
- an assessment of local facilities

Legislation

a) During School Hours

The DFE in its guidance to school governors stated that “education provided during school hours must be free”. 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..... the essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind”.

b) Outside school hours

“Parents can be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities which can be charged for as “optional extras”. It is up to the Governing Body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.

c) Residential Activity

“For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the costs of travel. However, charges may be made for board and lodgings in these circumstances, except for pupils whose parents are receiving Income Support.

Ref: Education Reform Act 1988: Sections 106-111, 117 and 118.
Guidance is contained in the DES circular 2/89: Charges for School Activities

Remissions Policy

Highters Heath Community School will implement the 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 the understanding of the relationships between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low incomes have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

A programme of visits will be arranged by Highters Heath Community School, which is directly related to the curriculum delivered. Parents will be given full information about visits.

Implementation

Planning, as part of the process of budget planning is essential to developing a charging policy at Highters Heath Community School 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 which takes into account costings.

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.

Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed and amended if necessary.

nb: For guidance on planning educational visits, refer to the school's educational visits handbook, a copy of which is in every year group.

26th April 2023