

Charging and Remissions Policy

Nottinghamshire County Council's charging policy applies the DfE's advice as follows:

The County Council expects schools to operate within the law and not charge for those activities for which, legally, charges cannot be made. Within these legal constraints, however, the County Council recognises that each school governing body is responsible for its own charging and remissions policy. The County Council would wish to encourage school governing bodies, in determining their policies in this respect, to be mindful of the financial circumstances of pupils and their parents. The County Council would also wish to remind school governing bodies that pupils may be assisted, at the governors' discretion, from the school's budget or other funds at their disposal and that pupils must not be excluded from any school activity that extends or enriches the curriculum for their class or group because they have not contributed to the cost.

Charges:

General position

In recognition of its commitment to free education, Nottinghamshire County Council does not normally charge pupils or parents for any activity which it directly organises, except in the circumstances described in this document.

Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Optional extras include:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, e.g Music & Drama Festival or,
 - Part of religious education
- Examination entry fees if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport
- Board & lodgings for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (e.g breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

In calculating the cost of the above optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The cost, or appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the option extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Voluntary contributions

The Governing Body can ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this should be made clear to parents at the outset. It should be made clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution and that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents.

Any other remission arrangements for a particular activity/event will be entirely at the discretion of the Governing Body.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal tuition is exempt from the rule.

Charges may be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size, provided that this is at the request of the pupil's parents. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the provision. The regulations make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

School governing body responsibilities for other school activities

The responsibility for charging for other school activities, for which charges are permitted under the Education Act 1996, rests with each individual school governing body, although the County Council expects that in determining their charging policies school governors will be mindful of the general principles set out in this document.

Residential visits

Charges may be made for the board and lodging element of any residential activities which take place during school hours. Any such charge will be calculated by reference to the actual cost of providing board and lodging for each pupil. Any optional extras may be included in the cost of the residential visit. These could include the following;

- the pupil's travel costs;
- the pupil's board and lodging costs;
- non-teaching staff costs;
- materials, instruments and other equipment;
- entrance fees to places of interest;
- insurance costs;
- the expenses only of any participating teachers engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the activity.

Any charges must not exceed the actual cost of providing the visit.

Any remission arrangements for such activities will be at the discretion of the Governing Body EXCEPT in the circumstances given below.

Remissions:

Pupils eligible for remission will be exempt from the board and lodging element of residential visits.

Remission will be for pupils in receipt Pupil Premium and on the basis of parent/carers in receipt of the following:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earning from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after the person stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Optional extras

The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

Damage to school property & equipment

The school may invoice the parent/guardian of a child who deliberately damages school property or equipment for a replacement or repair.

Outdoor & Environmental education

The council provides a range of day and residential outdoor and environmental education centres for pupils attending Nottinghamshire schools. Schools are charged a proportion of the running costs for the centres. These charges are however partially remitted in the case of visits which take place mainly during school hours to reflect the number of pupils attending who are eligible for pupil premium.