

The St Neots Learning Partnership

Charging and Remissions Policy

1. The legal position

- 1.1 Schools may invite, but not require, parents to make voluntary contributions to the school's activities in order to enhance what is otherwise provided e.g. school visits or journeys (see 3 below).
- 1.2 Charges may be made for the cost of activities provided outside school hours (see 2 below) except where the activity is specifically required by external examination syllabus or national curriculum legislation.
- 1.3 Schools are prohibited from charging for any activity undertaken within normal school hours (see 2 below) except for board and lodging on residential courses. (see Remissions below).

2. Activities partly during school hours

The Act prescribes a basis for determining whether an activity is deemed to take place in or out of school hours as follows:-

2.1 Non-residential activities

- i) if 50% or more of the period spent on the activity occurs during school hours then the activity is deemed to take place in school time.
- ii) where less than 50% of the period spent on the activity falls during school hours then the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours and may therefore be considered an 'optional extra'.

In calculation:-

- travel time can be counted only if the travel itself occurs during school hours.
- school hours do not include the mid-day break.

2.2 Residential Visits

For residential visits the calculation is based on the number of half-days taken up by the activity, including travel, relative to the number of school sessions the participant would have attended if the activity had not taken place.

For calculation:-

- i) a school day must be divided into two sessions
- ii) a 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight

- iii) where half or more of the school session is spent on the visit then all of the session counts
- a) If the number of school sessions missed by the participant is less than 50% of the number of half-days taken up by the activity then the visit is deemed to take place outside school hours.
- b) If the number of school sessions is 50% or more of the number of half-days then the visit is deemed to take place during school hours.

3. **Voluntary Contributions**

3.1 In seeking voluntary contributions for school activities schools must make it clear to parents that:

- i) there is no obligation to contribute
- ii) that students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made a contribution.

In consequence schools are permitted and are strongly advised to:-

- iii) indicate the level of contribution required for the activity to take place
- iv) consider that such contribution may include, for example, an element to cover the participation by students from low-income families or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers
- v) indicate that the activity may not take place if parents are reluctant to support it.

4. **Activities arranged during school hours by a Third Party**

4.1 Activity organisers should be aware that schools are not permitted to be involved in this type of arrangement. Organisers and leaders are therefore vulnerable since they are deemed to be operating outside their contractual obligation. Normal insurance cover does not apply.

4.2 Where such an activity involves a teacher at the school such a teacher would have to:-

- i) apply for leave of absence
- ii) arrange suitable and adequate insurance cover, including professional indemnity cover, for all accompanying adults
- iii) ensure the adequacy of arrangements made by the Third Party for the safety and welfare of the participants
- iv) remind parents to apply to the school for leave of absence for their children.

5. **Board and Lodging**

- 5.1 On residential visits the costs of board and lodging may be charged to students in all cases (except where remissions apply), whether in school hours or not.
- 5.2 Board and lodging costs are deemed to include all elements of food and accommodation as appropriate to the particular visit.
- 5.3 Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost of its provision for the individual student.
- 5.4 Accompanying teachers: the Act differentiates between visits undertaken in school hours and out of school hours. In the former case the board and lodging costs of staff cannot be passed on to students, except through voluntary contributions.
- 5.5 Residential activities taking place out of school hours (2.2a above) may include a cost element for engaging teachers specially for providing the activity and for supplying such teachers with travel, board and lodging. This can only be done by engaging teachers on a simple but separate contract to provide the optional extra.

6. **Examination Entries and Charges**

Regulations relating to charging for examination entries are covered by the Education Reform Act 1988, sections 106(5), 108(1,2).

- 6.1 The Governing Body must enter students for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the school has prepared them. This does not need to apply if the Governing Body thinks there are educational reasons for not entering a particular student, or if that student's parents or guardians ask in writing that the student should not be entered. The Local Education Authority may not override the Governing Body's decision on this.
- 6.2 It is the policy of this Partnership that all students should have the opportunity to sit for public examinations whenever there is a realistic chance of success. Early entry of candidates for public examinations will be at the discretion of the Principal.
- 6.3 Heads of Subject are responsible for choice of Examination Board, syllabus, specification and/or appropriate tier of entry. Candidates will be entered for examinations at the level of entry deemed appropriate by Heads of Subject, based on evidence of candidates' prior performance and the professional judgement of teaching staff.
- 6.4 There is no charge for entering students for approved public examinations (GCSE (including Entry Level), GCE (AS and A2), GNVQ and VCE), for which the Partnership has prepared candidates as part of the normal curriculum.

6.5 Charges cannot be made for any cost associated with preparing a student for an examination as part of the normal curriculum, but charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside of school hours for an examination, e.g. during holiday, lunch-time or after-school sessions.

6.6 An examination entry fee, including a charge for administration and/or invigilation, may be charged to parents or guardians of Partnership students if:

- The examination is on the set list, as set out in the a Partnership Academy's prospectus, but the student was not prepared for the examination by the Academy, or the preparation has been done out of school hours e.g. at lunchtime, evening or 'twilight' sessions;
- The examination is not on the set list, but the Partnership arranges for the candidate to take it;
- Subject to individual circumstances, the Partnership may seek reimbursement of fees from parents or guardians where a student, without good reason, fails to meet any examination requirement (e.g. by non-submission of coursework) or fails to be present for an examination for which the Governing Body originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.
- A student or his/her parent or guardian has requested the opportunity for the candidate to re-sit an examination, in whole or in part, where no further preparation has been provided by the Partnership. In this circumstance, the examination entry may be deemed to be an 'optional extra'.

6.7 The Partnership may assist mature students and external candidates by acting as a Centre for Public Examinations where requested and whenever practical. All costs for such entries must be met by the individuals concerned. The Partnership reserves the right to make an administration charge, including an element to cover the cost of invigilation, as appropriate.

7. **Remissions**

7.1 Board and lodging costs must be paid for families who receive family income support, where parents apply for such remission for any residential activity:

- i) during school hours
- ii) involving delivery of the national curriculum
- iii) required as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination.

7.2 For residential activities deemed to be optional extras, such remissions are at the discretion of the Partnership.