Rockcliffe First School: Charging and Remissions Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the agreed procedures relating to charging and remission for school activities and school visits at Rockcliffe First School. These have been drawn up in accordance with sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, which set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Further guidance was provided in February 2009 to complement the information given in "A Guide to the Law for School Governors" (Chapter 23) and this has also been considered in the formulation of this policy.

This policy was approved by the members of the Finance and Staffing Committee of the school governing body on 16th June 2009. It was adopted by the full governing body on 1st July 2009. It has been reviewed and approved by the members of the Finance and Staffing Committee on an annual basis, most recently in January 2024. Additional reviews and updates will be carried out at the earliest opportunity following any relevant changes in the law.

Charges

There will be no charges at Rockcliffe First School for any activities relating to:

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if that tuition is provided for all pupils as part of their education during school hours;
- any other activities except for those listed below.

Charges may be made for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them;
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra (see below, "music tuition");
- other optional extras.

Optional Extras

Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. **Optional extras are**:

- education provided outside of school time that is not a) part of the National Curriculum, b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school or c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/ governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras we will include an amount in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra.

Music Tuition

Charges will be made to cover the cost, or a proportion of the costs, of teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or in singing, where the tuition is an optional extra. However, charges will 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 pupil(s), or part of the Wider Opportunities scheme.

Transport

We at Rockcliffe will **not** charge for transport, including that provided in connection with an educational visit. However, we may ask parents and carers for a voluntary contribution to cover their children's equal share of the transport costs – see below.

Residential Visits
We at Rockcliffe will charge for board and lodging on residential visits. However, the charge will not exceed the actual cost. A request for a voluntary contribution to cover each individual pupil's equal share in the costs of transport will also be made.

However, when the headteacher informs parents about a forthcoming visit, she will make it clear that parents and carers who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:
- Universal Credit - (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Calculating Charges
- Any charges made will **not** exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. We will **not** include a subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.
- Where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge will **not** include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on a residential visit.
- Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions
We at Rockcliffe will ask for voluntary contributions towards the costs of school activities where it would otherwise be impossible to provide the activity due to lack of school funds. The head teacher will make it clear to parents and carers at the outset that:
- the activity may not be funded without sufficient voluntary contributions;
- there is no obligation to make any contribution;
- no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents or carers are unwilling or unable to pay; but that:
- if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, then it must be cancelled.

If limited places on an activity are available and a parent or carer is unwilling or unable to pay, then his or her child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The policy for allocating places on the activity will be made clear to parents and carers at the outset, eg in order of receipt of applications.
When making requests for voluntary contributions, the headteacher will not make parents and carers feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**. Colour coded reminder letters or direct debit or standing order mandates will NOT be sent to parents or carers when requesting contributions.

Remissions
At present the headteacher and governors of Rockcliffe First School are unaware of any circumstances in which it would remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to it in accordance with its charging policy. However, the governors delegate to the headteacher the power to remit charges to specific individuals or groups of individuals should occasions arise when this would be appropriate. For example, the Pupil Premium may be used to fund instrumental tuition for certain pupils. Any such instances will be discussed in the annual reviews of this document and any necessary changes to the policy will be made following the outcomes of those discussions.