



# MEREVALLEY FEDERATION

## CHARGING POLICY

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

This document outlines the charging and remission for school activities and school visits policy for Merebrook Infant and Emerson Valley Schools.

Please note that information on charges for letting out schools' premises is found in the Lettings Policy which is separate from this policy.

## 2 CHARGING IN EDUCATION

Both schools comply with the legal requirements set upon it by the above legislation. These are summarised below. For full details on any area of charging, please refer to the guidance listed in Section 1 above.

Please note that wherever "parent" is referenced, this should be understood to include carers and any other adult responsible for a pupil.

### 2.1 Where charges cannot be made

#### 2.1.1 Education

- Admission applications
- 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
  - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
  - Religious education
  - Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent
  - Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
  - Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

#### 2.1.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

#### 2.1.3 Residential visits

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:

- ❖ The national curriculum
- ❖ A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- ❖ Religious education
- ❖ Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

## **2.2 Where charges can be made**

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

### **2.2.1 Education**

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

### **2.2.2 Optional extras**

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
  - The national curriculum
  - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
  - Religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

When calculating the cost of 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 (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)

- The cost, or an 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 will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

### **2.2.3 Music tuition**

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

### **2.2.4 Residential visits**

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

## **2.3 Voluntary Contributions**

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

**Educational visits, sports activities such as tournaments and music festivals.**

**There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay.**

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

## **3 CHARGING AT MEREBROOK INFANT AND EMERSON VALLEY SCHOOLS**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board and the Headteacher to ensure that both Merebrook Infant and Emerson Valley Schools comply with the legislation as summarised above.

The ethos at both schools is that we should provide an educational experience oriented to the whole child. In order to provide this, the schools offer activities, in school and outside of school, which are designed to support the current curriculum and also to offer opportunities

for children to experience something they would not normally have access to. Funding for these activities will be in line with legislation.

However, in the current financial climate, it is not possible for these activities to be wholly funded by the schools without impacting on provision of core teaching and learning. In order to continue to provide the additional activities, parents/carers are asked to contribute, on a voluntary basis, to the costs of provision for each of the activities.

We appreciate that this can be an additional burden for families but without these contributions, it may be necessary to cancel an activity.

In addition, there are some activities which are wholly outside of school educational provision; these are offered at a cost to parents/carers and are optional.

### **3.1 Music Tuition**

Emerson Valley School currently employs a specialist music teacher who teaches groups and clubs during the school week as part of the core curriculum.

Additional music lessons are available from a local Peripatetic Music Service, as an optional extra. These are at an additional cost to parents/carers as charged by the service.

### **3.2 Extra Examinations**

Both schools provide teaching and learning in line with the National Curriculum working towards Key Stage 1 and 2 expectations and assessments only. It does not provide teaching or support for any other prescribed public examination e.g. 11+, music theory or practical etc.

### **3.3 After School Activities**

These occur outside of school hours, including transport to and from the location as appropriate. Charges will be levied to cover the costs of all resources, including, but not limited to, staffing, transport and any fees relating to the activities.

Normally, these are offered on a first-come, first-served basis; the schools reserve the right to cancel any of these clubs should there be insufficient numbers to cover the costs of the club.

### **3.4 After School Provision**

After school provision, both before and after school, is outside of school funding expectations and, under the legislation, considered an optional extra (see section 2.1 above)

#### **3.4.1 Breakfast Club**

Emerson Valley School wants all children to have the best opportunity to learn that we can provide. With this in mind, children who qualify for Pupil Premium, will be given the opportunity to attend Breakfast Club at a reduced cost.

Merebrook Infant School has a breakfast club which is operated on site by an external company. Attendance at the club will be in line with the company's charges.

#### **3.4.2 After School Care**

After School Care is provided by the Emerson Valley to offer wrap round care for children who attend the school. Whilst the school makes every effort to provide interesting activities in this period, it is essentially child care provision. Merebrook Infant School has after school care which is operated on site by an external company. Attendance at the club will be in line with the company's charges.

The schools will not subsidise access to either of these services for children and expect parents/carers to pay for this service in line with all information provided/charges notified by the service provider.

## **3.5 Trips**

### **3.5.1 Day Trips**

Both schools schedule day trips to support delivery of the National Curriculum. Each year group will be offered the opportunity to go on day trips linked to the curriculum for that year. These are normally offered at least once per term. Each trip has been scheduled to link in with the current topic/s being studied by the year group and attendance at the trip is expected from all children within the year group.

However, in the current financial climate, it is not possible for these trips to be wholly funded by the schools without impacting on provision of core teaching and learning. Whilst the schools will allocate some funds to each day trip scheduled during the school year, parents/carers are asked to contribute, on a voluntary basis, to the costs of provision for each trip. Where insufficient contributions are received, a trip will be cancelled prior to the schools incurring any cancellation charges.

### **3.5.2 Residential Trips**

Residential trips are offered to students in years 5 and 6. These trips are not educationally based and do not support delivery of the National Curriculum; they are designed to offer students the opportunity to experience activities which are not part of the core curriculum including key social opportunities such as staying away from home. Charges are made to cover the costs for transport, activities and board and lodging. Costs for staff who attend residential trips are not included in the overall cost of the trips. Adults who attend in order to support the trip do so at no extra cost.

Attendance at residential trips is at the discretion of parents/carers and costs for attendance are expected to be fully funded by parents/carers. The trip location may have quotas for booking or too few attendees may increase costs for all attendees. In circumstances such as these, the school reserves the right to cancel a trip.

## **3.6 Breakages or Damage to School Premises/Equipment**

The Executive Headteacher may ask parents to pay for damage to school property or equipment where this is the result of the pupil's behaviour, either during or outside of school hours.

## **3.7 Catering**

School meals for children in Early Years and Years 1 and 2 are currently funded by the Department of Education. All children at Merebrook Infant School have the opportunity to partake of school lunches at no cost to parents/carers.

Catered school lunches are provided by an external company at Emerson Valley School. Charges for lunches are set by the company. Children who are entitled to Free School Meals will be funded in line with current legislation.

## **3.8 Other**

If a parent indicates in advance that they would like to keep the finished product created as part of a school activity, the schools reserve the right to charge for the cost of ingredients and/or materials used to create the product.



## 4 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Governing Board recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible, we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead;
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments; however, all payments must be received prior to the trip taking place.

## 5 REMISSIONS

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- 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 that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)

## 6 REFUNDS

The calculation of costs for an activity is made on the basis of the numbers of pupils in the relevant year or class group. It is therefore not possible to offer a refund of the activity cost if a child is unable to attend at short notice or after the cancellation cut-off date advertised for a specific activity.

If an activity is cancelled as a result of insufficient interest or funding, all monies paid by parents/carers will be re-funded.