Learning Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

Adopted: December 2023

Review date: December 2024

Introduction

LINK Learning Trust recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development.

The Trust aims to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of each school, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities. However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received or parents are charged for the cost.

This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Statement:
The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996:

Where 'parent' is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil.

We aim:

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils 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
- To respond to the variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

Legislation – Educational During School Hours

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that "education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of "education" includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity." It goes on to advise that "although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)"

When additional costs are incurred by LINK Learning Trust schools to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions.

However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

Education out of School

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that "Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay.

The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as "optional extras".

Voluntary contributions

When organising school trips or visits to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded, and the school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities, organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to or by a theatre company;
- musical events.
- Some after school coaching activities
- Visits and trips

Charges:

LINK Learning Trust reserves the right to make a charge for the activities and items detailed below:

- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum or are outside the school day (i.e. Weekend residential)

- After school and Breakfast clubs

Sports activities

Schools may offer a range of sporting activities. We make a small charge for these sessions.

All coaches will be DBS checked.

Music tuition - if it is not required for the National Curriculum and is provided for an individual pupil or for groups of pupils

Charges may be made to parents for individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parental agreement and a signed contract will be obtained before the tuition is provided

Damage to school property - the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost book, where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour.

Loss or Damage to school books (Reading scheme)

Ingredients or Materials for Practical Subjects

Parents are encouraged to provide ingredients, materials, etc. needed for practical subjects such as Technology. The Trust may charge for, at cost or less, or require the supply of, ingredients and materials if parents have indicated, in advance, their wish to own the finished product.

Residential visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide additional educational opportunities The DfE in its guidance to School Governors, states that “For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of the travel.

However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances.”

If we cannot raise sufficient funding through these contributions, the visit may have to be cancelled. We will support families in a variety of ways. For example, extended payment times and grant applications.

Individual schools within the trust may have their own pupil premium strategy. Please refer to individual school’s web site for details.