

Charging and Remissions



Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
May 2024	May 2025	Mr Smith

The Board of Governors are required to determine and keep under review a charges and remissions policy in respect of the charges it proposes to make for any optional extras of board and lodging. Article 131 Para 1 Educational Reform (NI) Order 1989.

Any optional extra which is provided by the Board of Governors, wholly or mainly outside school hours, and which is not specifically required to meet the Board of Governors' statutory duty to deliver Religious Education or to deliver any component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, or an approved public examination, will require a parental contribution. Although, there is no obligation to provide such optional extras. Where the Board of Governors has decided to provide an optional extra the charge on the parents/carers of participating pupils will be based on the full per capita cost.

At Earlview Primary School and Nursery we do our best to keep costs for parents to a minimum. Every effort is made to utilise the school budget, P.T.A. funds and grant-schemes to supplement costs we might otherwise be forced to pass on to parents in order to provide services for our pupils that are above and beyond the minimum requirements of the N.I. Curriculum.

The objectives of the charging provisions in the Order are:-

- to maintain the right to free education
- to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parent's ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- To emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give Boards and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly outside of school hours.
- To confirm the right of Boards and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.

The Board of Governors of Earlview supports the objectives laid out above. The Board further recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities can make towards pupils' personal and social education – through clubs, educational visits, residential experiences, etc. The Board of Governors aims to promote such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils and as additional optional activities.

Main Points

It is not proper practice to request payment from parents for activities that form a necessary part of the mainstream curriculum, nor is it fair. So to that end we will:

- Only operate a 'paid' activity during regular school hours (such as an educational visit or sports activity) when a sizeable majority of parents are willing to fund it.
- Organise any additional 'paid' educational visits/activities with suitable notice in advance to allow maximum number of children to attend.
- Where a large expense is necessary (such as residential educational visits) we will endeavour to accommodate payment in instalments. All families will be required to pay the full amount for any educational visits, unless otherwise stated at the time of booking.
- When running a 'paid' activity parents will be asked for a 'Donation'.
- Provide an alternative educational activity for pupils whose families have elected not to make a donation towards the cost of an activity when a sizeable majority are willing and the school is unable to supplement the cost.
- Require a fee for the rental of school-owned musical instruments comparative with the EA annual fee.

Instrumental Tuition

Instrumental tuition is provided through the EA's Music Service this is optional and parents will be asked to pay a contribution towards the EA's Music Service charge. The charge is dependent on the number of children receiving lessons.

A charge for the loan of a music-service instrument will be made directly to parents from the EA's Music Service. Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals are entitled to full remission.

For hygiene reasons it is expected the children purchase their own Recorder.

Board and Lodging

Where a school activity involves pupils spending a night or nights away from home, a charge for board and lodging will be requested. Where such a residential educational visit is considered an "Optional Extra", this charge will not be remitted.

Where a residential educational visit must be provided free under Article 129 Paragraphs 2 and 4, parents in receipt of Income Support or Family Credit are entitled to have these charges remitted when they declare and give evidence of their circumstances. Such parents may make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the residential educational visit.

Voluntary Contributions

As explained earlier in this statement of policy, the school recognises the value Voluntary Contributions can make to the enrichment of the Curriculum and to school

life in general. When seeking such contributions the Board will bear in mind the following considerations:-

- the need for long-term planning to prevent the financial consequences of cancellation if funds are not forthcoming on an adequate basis.
- the right of parents to withdraw their voluntary contributions before a booking has been made.
- the circumstances under which the activity could be cancelled without the school incurring financial penalty
- the availability of other sources of funding to subsidise the activity.

Incidentals

Neither the pupil nor their parents may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books or other equipment for use in connection with education during school hours. Parents can be invited to make voluntary contributions towards particular items but no child should be disadvantaged by a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute in this way. Equipment is defined as excluding clothing. Parents can still expect that essential protective clothing – e.g. safety goggles – will be provided free of charge.

Although the school must be prepared to provide or pay for any ingredients, materials, equipment, etc. needed for practical subjects, the school may charge for, or require the supply of ingredients and materials, if parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

Breakages or Fines

The school may require parents to pay for the cost of a broken window, defaced, damaged or lost textbook, etc. There is nothing in the 1989 Order to prevent the school making such requests.

The Board of Governors wishes to stress that no child will be prevented from taking part in any form of activity considered to be an essential part of that child's education due to unwillingness or inability on the part of his/her parents to meet the cost of any financial charges this may involve. When charges are being levied, voluntary contributions sought, etc. the school will inform the parents of all children concerned in good time and explain the reason behind the charges.