

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY



Charging and Remissions Policy

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to the principle of free education at the schools it maintains and believes that central to this principle is an entitlement curriculum to which all pupils should have free access as of right. Nottinghamshire County Council schools are resourced accordingly. It is not expected therefore that schools will charge for activities which have been resourced through their budgets.
2. The County Council recognises the valuable contribution schools can make to the range of educational experiences offered to their pupils by organising a range of visits and other non-classroom based activities, either inside or outside school hours. The County Council accepts that in these circumstances it may be necessary for a school to seek financial contributions from parents if the expenses of a particular activity cannot wholly be contained from within the funds normally available to the school.
3. In arranging activities for which a voluntary parental contribution may be sought, the County Council expects each school to bear in mind whether the requested contribution is reasonable and within the scope of the majority of parents of pupils at the school.
4. The County Council expects schools to operate within the law and not charge for those activities for which, legally, charges cannot be made. Within these legal constraints, however, the County Council recognises that each school governing body is responsible for its own charging and remissions policy. The County Council would wish to encourage school governing bodies, in determining their policies in this respect, to be mindful of the financial circumstances of pupils and their parents. The County Council would also wish to remind school governing bodies that pupils may be assisted, at the governors' discretion, from the school's budget or other funds at their disposal and that pupils must not be excluded from any school activity that extends or enriches the curriculum for their class or group because they have not made a contribution to the cost.

CHARGING POLICY

General position

5. In recognition of its commitment to free education, Nottinghamshire County Council does not normally charge pupils or parents for any activity which it directly organises, except in the circumstances described in this document.

School governing body responsibilities

6. The responsibility for charging for other school activities, for which charges are permitted under the Education Act 1996, rests with each individual school governing body, although the County Council expects that in determining their charging policies school governors will be mindful of the general principles set out in this document.

Activities organised by the County Council

7. The Council may from time to time directly provide various activities and rehearsals for those pupils at its schools who are members of the LA's 11th session arts workshops. A similar range of activities may be organised for registered pupils who participate in various performance activities organised by the County Council.

8. Pupils participate in these activities on a voluntary basis and the County Council reserves the right to make charges, where these are permitted by the Education Act 1996, in the following circumstances:

Residential activities held during school hours

Charges may be made at the discretion of the County Council for the board and lodging element of any residential activities which take place during school hours. Any such charge will be calculated by reference to the actual cost of providing board and lodging for each pupil; no other costs will be covered by the charge.

Any remission arrangements for activities of this type will be at the discretion of the Director of Children and Young People's Services, except in the circumstances described in paragraph 14 below. No pupil will be excluded from any of the activities due to an inability to pay.

Activities held outside school hours

Charges may be made at the discretion of the Council for these activities. Any such charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating in the activity. The cost of other pupils participating in the activity will not be included in the charge. The charge may however include an appropriate element for the following, as appropriate:

- The pupil's travel costs;
- The pupil's board and lodging costs;
- Non-teaching staff costs;
- Materials, instruments and other equipment;
- Entrance fees to places of interest;
- Insurance costs;
- The expenses only of any participating teachers engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the activity.

Any remission arrangements for such activities will be at the discretion of the Director of Children and Young People's Services.

The Nottinghamshire Learning Centre (Pupil Referral Units)

9. NCC manages a Learning Centre (PRU) located at 4 main sites across the county, for children with behaviour difficulties, which are not attached to a specific school. The Council's charging and remissions policies for any activities arranged for registered pupils attending these units are explained in the appendix attached to this document.

REMISSION POLICY

10. The Council has determined the following policies which partly or wholly remit certain charges which may be payable by pupils and their parents. The remission policy set out below relates to pupils attending schools maintained by Nottinghamshire County Council and in certain cases is only available to those pupils who actually live in Nottinghamshire.

Sports clothing

11. The Council's school clothing assistance scheme which is under review, currently provides for assistance to be given towards the cost of a pupil's clothing, including sports clothing, where the pupil's parents are eligible for certain benefits and can demonstrate exceptional circumstances. Only pupils who live in Nottinghamshire are entitled to assistance under this scheme.

11th session arts workshops

12. The Council provides a range of 11th session arts workshops for pupils outside normal school hours. Pupils are expected to meet their own travel costs. However, the County Council operates a scheme of financial assistance towards the travel costs of those pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals or school access grants. The current level of assistance given amounts to the full travel costs involved less a defined parental contribution. The parental contributions are reviewed annually.

Outdoor and Environmental education

13. The Council provides a range of day and residential outdoor and environmental education centres for pupils attending Nottinghamshire Council schools. Schools are charged a proportion of the running costs for the centres. These charges are, however, partially remitted, in the case of visits which take place mainly during school hours, to reflect the number of pupils attending who are eligible for free school meals.

Board and lodging charges for residential trips

14. Any charges for board and lodging for a residential trip, within the terms of the schemes outlined above, will be fully remitted either by the Council or the school governing body, depending upon who funds the visit, provided that the activity:

(i) Takes place during school hours, OR

(ii) Forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or fulfils statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or religious education, irrespective of whether the activity takes place within or outside school hours and the parents of the pupil are in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- An income-related employment and support allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, where the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
- For Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils only (subject to final Parliamentary approval by September 2010): in addition to the above, families receiving Working Tax Credit and with an annual income that does not exceed £16,190 (as Assessed by HM Revenue and Customs)
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

The School Governing Body reserves the right to review and amend this policy statement from time to time, as appropriate.