Charging for School Activities Policy

Introduction.

The school policy for Charging for school Activities was developed by the Local Authority of Nottingham City and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The policy was approved and ratified by the Finance and General Purposes Sub-committee of Governing Body during the Spring Term 2009.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. This guidance has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in "A Guide to the Law for School Governors" (Chapter 23). This guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms. This guide is also referred to in paragraph 1.82 in the School Admissions Code, and in para 1.97 in the revised School Admissions Code (in force from 10/2/09).

Ambleside Primary School will ensure that it informs parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 4 of this guide of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Ambleside Primary School cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any maintained school;
- 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[1], 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 the tuition is required as 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;

Ambleside Primary School following the law is able and can charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances. Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.
    - The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making

power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

- Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "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.

- 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 an amount may be included 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, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and

- 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.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore 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. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school 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

Nothing in legislation prevents our school governing body from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The Head teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

Ambleside Primary School will not make requests for contributions from direct debit or standing order mandates from parents.

What happens if our school is not able to raise enough voluntary contributions to cover costs?

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, for example school funds and/or fundraising activities, then it must be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions will be made clear in the information sent to parents.

What if a parent is unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution? How does this affect their child(ren)?

Ambleside Primary school cannot exclude a child from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution. This could clearly place our school in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The Head teacher will then decide whether the school can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

What support can a school offer a parent/carer who has difficulty making a financial contribution?

Ambleside Primary School will ensure that parents in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £15,575 (Financial Year 2008/09). Parents should be encouraged to speak confidentially to the head teacher about this.

Residential Visits

Ambleside Primary School **cannot** charge for:

- 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, 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; and

- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Ambleside Primary School **can** charge for:

- board and lodging. The charge will not exceed the actual cost.

When we inform parents about a forthcoming visit, we will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £15,575 (Financial Year 2008/09);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Transport

Ambleside Primary School **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport such as swimming.
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is

deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1: Visit during school hours

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Ambleside Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

All staff have equal access and inclusive rights to their work regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race, disability or ability. Ambleside Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in the spring term 2013.