

UCD Ceredigion PRU

Charges Policy



Signed: Mr Gareth Lewis

*This Policy was reviewed and revised by the Governing Management Committee in:
December 2019*

It will be reviewed again in: December 2020

Policy Statement:

The Education Act 1996: Sections 449-462 sets out the law as to what can and cannot be charged for activities in LA maintained schools in England and Wales. The Act sets out what activities a governing body can and cannot charge for when these take place during or outside school hours, including residential activities. The Act also states that all governing bodies should have charging and non-charging policies in place.

Education during School Hours

There is no charge for admitting pupils to maintained schools or for education provided during school hours, including materials, books, equipment and transport provided during school hours by the LA or school to transport pupils between school and school activity. 'School hours' are those hours when a school is in operation, and do not include the break in the middle of the school day. Parents and others are entitled to information about school hours and that information must be included in handbooks published by the school.

Sometimes an activity can take place partly during school hours and partly outside. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as an activity that takes place entirely during school hours and there is no charge. (Time spent traveling does not count as time during school hours unless travel takes place during school hours.)

Parents cannot be charged for activities that take place outside school hours if those activities are an essential part of the National Curriculum or religious education.

Other activities that take place outside of school hours can be charged for if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 describes chargeable activities as 'optional additions'.

Residential Activities

There are special rules for residential activities. A trip counts as one that occurs during school hours if the number of school sessions missed by the pupil is half or more than the half days spent on the activity. Each school day is usually divided into two sessions and each 24 hour period is divided into two half days starting at noon and midnight.

On this basis, a term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday would extend over nine half-days, including five school sessions, and would count as one that takes place during school time. A journey from noon on Thursday to 9pm on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and for charging purposes would be counted out of school hours. If 50% or more of a half-day is spent on a residential trip, count the whole of that half-day as one spent on the trip.

In the case of residential activity which takes place mainly during school time, or which relates to the national curriculum or religious education, no charge can be made for the education or the cost of travel. In these circumstances, however, a charge may be made for refreshments and accommodation, except in the case of pupils whose parents receive one or more of the following:

- Income Support;
- Jobseeker's Allowance - income based;
- receive any other benefit or allowance, or are entitled to any tax credit under the Tax Credits Act 2002 or an element of such tax credit, as determined by regulations from time to time during any period of a tour or part of a tour is conducted.

Currently the following is specified:

- assistance under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided the parent (s) are also not in receipt of Working Tax Credit and the family income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £ 16,040 (for 2009/10) (ie children eligible for free school meals).

The headteacher will inform all parents that they can claim free activities if they receive these benefits.

Charging and Not Charging

If all pupils are charged, this will not exceed the actual cost. If more money needs to be raised, for example, to help hardship, then this is done through voluntary contributions or fundraising in general.

Voluntary Contributions

Although the school cannot charge for activities during school hours, parents and others can be invited to make voluntary contributions (in cash or otherwise) to make the school's money go further. Every request that parents receive for voluntary contributions must make it absolutely clear that the contributions would be voluntary. The governing body will also make it clear that the children of non-contributing parents will not be treated differently. If a special activity cannot go ahead without some parental help, this should be made clear to them at the planning stage.

When there are not enough voluntary contributions to enable the activity to go ahead, and the rest of the money cannot be found, then the activity will have to be cancelled. The essential point is that no pupil can be excluded from an activity because parents cannot or will not make any contribution.

Musical Instrument Training

The school charges a seasonal fee of £30 per child for music tuition provided by the Education Authority within mainstream schools. Within the PRU, there is no charge for Music lessons. We pay a service level agreement from PRU funding.

Activities not run by the School or LA

If parents want their children to attend an out-of-school activity that is not a school activity and the school does not organize it, they will then have to ask the school to agree to their child being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take their children out of school for a family holiday.

When the school building is donated to the service of local agencies / organizations a charge will be made in accordance with Ceredigion Education Authority guidelines.

Purposeful Damage:

It is part of Ceredigion's PRU policy to ask parents for a contribution towards repairing bespoke damage caused to school resources / buildings.

This policy was reviewed in October 2018 and was adopted and shared with the governing body on November 2018.

Cadeirydd y Llywodraethwyr –Mr O Jones

