

DVHS Charging Policy

Statement of Purpose

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. This policy will identify activities for which charges will and will not be made.

Principles

Darwen Vale High School and Engineering College both values and recognises the uniqueness of each individual child and acknowledges their fundamental right to be educated to their full potential in a safe, secure and caring environment.

Governors believe that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) irrespective of their parents / carers financial means. This policy outlines how the school will best ensure that a good range of visits and activities are offered whilst trying to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

1. Activities where no charges will be made

- No charge will be made for education during school hours or for education necessary to fulfil National Curriculum requirements or the requirements of prescribed public examinations other than those referred to below.
- All entries to prescribed public examinations will be free of charge, subject to the provision in Section 108 which states that examination fees may be recovered from parents / carers where a pupil fails to sit an examination without good reason, or to complete coursework requirements. Governors and/or the Local Authority will remain arbiters of the circumstances which constitute 'good reason'.

2. Activities for which charges may be made

The Governors reserve the right to make a charge for the following activities organised by the school as follows:

- There will be a small charge for tuition on a musical instrument offered in school hours.
- The board and lodging and transport element, as specified in Section 106 of the Act, of any residential activities deemed to take place within school hours.
- The full cost to each pupil of any activities deemed to be optional extras, taking place outside school hours.
- The cost of materials, ingredients and equipment or the provision of them by parents / carers in Design Technology and Food Technology, providing that the parents / carers have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished products.
- The fees for examinations for which the pupil was not prepared by the school, and for entry to non-prescribed public examinations, whether the pupil was prepared by the school or not.
- The recovery of examination fees which the school has paid (or is liable to pay) in the circumstances outlined above.
- The costs of wilful damage to or loss of school or Local Authority property if the damage or loss arises from behaviour of a pupil in contravention of the school's Code of Conduct.

The governors may, from time to time, amend the categories of activities for which a charge may be made.

3. Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in the policy precludes the governing body from inviting parents / carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing a wide variety of curriculum and educational experiences for pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and pupils of parents / carers who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

Income Support or Family Credit

Where the parents / carers of a pupil are in receipt of income support or family credit, the Governing Body will remit in full the cost of board and lodging for any residential activity that it organises for the pupil, if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours, or where it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or the National Curriculum.

In other circumstances, there may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made. When organising a chargeable activity the Governing Body will invite parents to apply in confidence for remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of such remission will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

Guidelines

School will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible publish a list of visits at the beginning of the term so that parents can plan ahead
- There is an opportunity for parents / carers to pay in instalments
- It is acknowledged that offering opportunities on a first pay, first served basis restricts pupils from families on lower incomes and this method will only be used if there is a restriction on places available.
- Charges will not exceed the actual cost per pupil of provision