

Charging and Remissions Policy for School Activities	
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1 Introduction & Principles

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the trust provides many opportunities for its students/children/young people to enrich and enhance their experience through Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and optional extras. This encompasses both on-site and off-site learning, residential activities, environmental studies, sports, physical and cultural activities, weekend trips, holiday activities, business visits, conference and adventurous activities.

The value of LOtC is well recognised by the Governing Body and fully supported throughout the school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear information about charging and voluntary contributions for South Downs Education Trust's LOtC activities.

2 Voluntary Contributions

In general no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it should be free.

It is therefore not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or admission costs for swimming lessons or for visits to museums, etc. during school hours. South Downs Education Trust follows the West Sussex *Policy for Charging for School Activities* that mirrors the information given in the Department for Education's advice document published in June 2025 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>) and should be read in conjunction with the information provided in the National Guidance www.oeapng.info.

No compulsory charge will be made for any activity which takes place during school hours apart from Board and Lodgings costs (see section 4).

Any contribution is entirely voluntary, and the pupils of parents/carers who are unable or unwilling to contribute must not be discriminated against. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then the activity may be cancelled.

Charges for optional extras will not exceed the actual cost and will be itemised transparently.

3 Arrangements

To ensure good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that:

- All letters regarding contributions for school activities will make it clear that these are voluntary and that children of parents/carers who do not contribute will not be treated differently.
- If any parents/carers have any financial difficulty (no pupil will be prevented from taking part) they will be invited to talk to the trips team who will come to an agreed arrangement between Senior Leaders and the parent.
- 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.

4 Residential Trips

Special rules apply for residential activities. 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.

4.1 In School Hours

If a residential visit takes place covering 50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity within the school week or it meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination or is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge will be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

However, charges not exceeding the actual cost for all individual pupils* will be made for board and lodging which are not voluntary. Voluntary contributions (as above) will be requested for the remaining costs of the trip/activity.

*Pupils whose parents/carers are in receipt of the following support payments FSM or Universal Credit with a net earned income not exceeding the threshold set by the DfE will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of the Board and Lodgings element:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;
- Income support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (IBJSA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit;
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.

This threshold may be subject to change and should be checked against the latest DfE guidance.

4.2 Outside School Hours

An activity is deemed to take place out of school hours if 50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity occurs out of the school week and is not a requirement of the syllabus for a public examination or is not to do with the national curriculum or religious education.

In this case this will be considered as an 'optional extra' and a charge will be levied which includes an appropriate element for travel costs, board and lodging costs, materials and other equipment, non-teaching costs and teaching staff costs.

This charge will not exceed the actual cost of the provision.

5 Transparency and Communication

- On booking, schools will provide clear breakdowns of costs for trips and activities
- parents will be informed of remission eligibility and how to apply.

6 Refunds/Cancellation Charges

All trip/activity deposits are non-refundable unless the trip is cancelled by the school or the student is removed from the trip by the school.

Further payments made for trips/activities will only be eligible for a refund (if parents/students cancel) if the school is able to obtain a refund from the tour operator or activity organiser.

If the trip/activity is cancelled by the school, then a full refund will be made which includes the initial deposit.

Students, whose behaviour record, following being accepted for the trip or activity, is not/becomes unacceptable, will not be permitted to attend the trip/activity. Refunds will only be payable if the school is able to obtain a refund from the tour operator or activity organiser.

7 Music Tuition

There will be no charge for musical tuition if the teaching is an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

For other musical tuition, charges will be made for individuals or groups to play a musical instrument, and for the hire and repair of instruments which are used for instrumental tuition at school.

No charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).