

# Houghton Primary School

## Charging and Remissions Policy

The aim of this Policy is to follow the basic principle – that education should be free of charge if it takes place during school hours. School hours at Houghton Primary School are 8.40am–3.15pm. Any charges that are made (excluding voluntary contributions) will not exceed the actual cost of the provision

### **Voluntary Contributions**

Although we do not charge for most of our school-time activities, we invite parents to make a contribution to make school funds go further. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents, this is explained to parents during the planning stage. The essential point is that no pupil will be left out of an activity because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution. It may be necessary to state that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it. Contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary. There is no obligation to contribute and registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.

There is no limit on the level of voluntary contribution, which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is any restriction placed upon the use, which can be made of such contributions. A request for a contribution towards the cost of a particular activity could, for example, include the cost of subsidizing pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying adults. Alternatively, parents could be asked to contribute towards part of the cost at the time of the visit or activity, and the rest could be met from other resources.

### **Musical Instrument Tuition**

There is an exception to the rule about not charging for activities in school hours. Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil, or pupils in a group of up to four, to play musical instrument, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil.

### **Education Partly During School Hours**

Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge can be made. Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours. As an example, a long distance trip might involve much travel before and after school hours, but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours, the trip would count as happening in school time and be free of charge. By contrast, a trip which involved leaving school an hour earlier than usual in the afternoon, but then went on until quite late in the evening, would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed.

### **Residential Activities**

Special rules apply for residential activities. The following need to be considered:

- A trip counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts to half or more of the number of days taken up by the activity
- Each school day is normally divided into two sessions and each 24-hour period is divided into two half-days beginning at noon and midnight. Therefore, for example:
  - A term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday, would last for nine half-days, including five school sessions, and would count as taking place in school time
  - A trip from noon on Thursday to 9pm on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and would therefore be classified for charging as taking place outside school time
- For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the cost of travel.
- However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils whose parents are receiving:

Income Support;

Income based Jobseeker's Allowance;

Support under Part VI of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999;

Child Tax Credit (Providing that they are not entitled to Working Tax

Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £14,155 for the year 2006-7);

Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

- The Head teacher will advise parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

### **Remission**

Parents who have contributed voluntarily may have a refund if their child is unable to take part in the trip through illness.