

Parental Payment for Trips/Events

I have been asked to explain the school's position regarding the above and the reason why we ask for a "voluntary contribution" rather than directly asking for payment.

The school's legal position and obligations are made clear in the DfE document "Charging for School Activities" which can be found via the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514619/Charging_for_school_activities.pdf

This document outlines what the Governors are not allowed to charge parents for, which includes things like exercise books, teacher supply cover and materials. The school is allowed to charge for "optional extras"; this covers things like after-school activities and transport to/from a venue.

The cost of curriculum subjects should be met by the school. In the case of swimming, the costs are prohibitive to the budget – we just cannot afford to pay for all the children to swim for a five week period every year. The Friends subsidise the cost of swimming but, if parents were not prepared to contribute to the cost for their child's swimming lessons, we would not be able to provide this area of the curriculum for the same duration and would have to cut down on the number of trips to the pool, reduce the frequency (i.e. only one set of swimming lessons during KS1) or explain our reasons to the DfE. Historically, we have been lucky enough that our parents are willing to help us out in this regard.

However, many of the things that we ask you to contribute to are activities that are outside the demands of the National Curriculum; things like theatre trips, farm and author visits and museum trips. These are nice things, but not essential, for the children to share with their peer group, enhancing both their learning and their experiences of the outside world.

Our school budget does not enable us to provide these activities for the children, so we need to ask for your help. The above document makes it quite clear that no child can be excluded because their parents don't or won't pay, and we are not allowed to demand payment. We are therefore required to ask you to pay, whilst making it quite clear that you are not obliged to do so. We are not allowed (nor would we want) to make a profit from school trips, so the amount we ask you to pay is the exact cost of the event divided by the number of children participating. If a parent does not pay, the school budget will make up the difference – as long as there are not too many parents not paying, making the cost untenable, in which case we would need to cancel the activity. We are obliged to make sure you know that the trip may have to be cancelled if we do not receive enough "voluntary contributions", hence the exact wording of our letters.

We will never cancel a trip or not allow a child to take part in an activity because of money. If ever there is a financial problem, please talk to your class teacher or directly to me so we can sort something out.

I hope this clarifies the school's position.

Sarah Matthews

Head Teacher