

SECTION 7.0: CHARGES AND ALLOWANCES

7.1 Are any charges made for school activities?

In general, schools may not charge for the education of their pupils. Every governing body of a school is required to determine and keep under review a policy covering the circumstances under which charges for any 'optional extra' or board and lodging may be levied. Parents and carers are advised to contact the school for a copy of their Charging and Remissions policy. There are some circumstances in which charges may be made.

Instrumental Music Tuition

Standard charging arrangements exist for parents to be charged part of the cost, if their children receive instrumental music tuition in a small group (up to and including 4 children) or have individual lessons with one of the County's specialist teachers.

Residential Activities

Parents will be required to contribute towards the cost of accommodation and meals for residential activities organised by the school as part of the curriculum. Transport is provided free of charge to the designated Outdoor Education Centres, though schools may ask parents for voluntary contributions.

Swimming

No charge is made to parents for swimming instruction organised by the school, though schools may ask for voluntary contributions.

Examinations

Fees for public examinations are usually paid by the Local Authority. Entry for approved public examinations is encouraged as long as pupils have a reasonable chance of success. Decisions in these matters are normally left to the professional judgement of each Headteacher and the school staff. Parents may be asked to pay fees if pupils fail to attend an examination for which they have been entered.

Meals

There is a duty for all maintained schools to provide a paid meal service where parents require one, this service need not be by the provision of a hot meal. Some schools have a full catering service provided by a variety of caterers and others have a sandwich pack service.

Milk

There is no requirement for milk to be provided in schools. However, some schools choose to operate a European Community Scheme where milk is provided at a subsidised rate and a Department of Health Scheme providing free milk for the under 5's. Where milk is provided at a school it must be free to children who are eligible to free school meals.

National School Fruit Scheme

All children aged 4 to 6 years, who attend schools which participate in the National School Fruit Scheme, will be entitled to a piece of fruit at break time without charge.

Free Schools Meals

Free school meals are only available to pupils whose parents are in receipt of one of the following:

- a) **Income Support** or
- b) **Job Seekers Allowance - (Income Based)**
- c) Support under **part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- d) **Child Tax Credit**, provided they are **not entitled to Working Tax Credit** and have an annual income, as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs that does not exceed **£14,495**
- e) **Guarantee** element of **State Pension Credit**

Forms and details are also obtainable from the Council's website www.worcestershire.gov.uk (information correct at time of going to press but eligibility for Free School Meals and Child Tax Credit thresholds are reviewed regularly by central government)

7.2 Do families on low income have to pay charges?

Charges for music tuition and residential activities mentioned above are not made for children whose parents net weekly income does not exceed £209 with effect from September 2007. Parents should apply to the Headteacher of their school. The qualifying income level is reviewed annually.

7.3 Is there an allowance for essential clothing?

An allowance may be available for essential clothing. In the most recent financial year, the essential clothing allowance was available only for a limited range of items. Grants are considered only for children from the date they would start school under the County Council's standard admissions policy and later when they move on to each stage of schooling. The scheme is subject to revision each year.

Applications for assistance should be addressed to the Director of Children's Services, Worcestershire County Council, County Buildings, Bewdley Road, Kidderminster. DY11 6RQ. **For enquiries please contact (01562) 820840 and ask for Clothing Grants.**

For a copy of the Children's Services Charging and Remissions Policy please contact:

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Worcestershire County Council
P.O. Box 73
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WR5 2YA