

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School



*“Together with Jesus we
Love, Learn and Believe”*

Charging & Remissions Policy
2024 - 2025

Mission Statement

Together with Jesus, we love, learn and believe.

Introduction

The Governors regard the School as a community resource and it is their wish to encourage as much use of the School's resources by the local and wider community as possible (where this does not detract from the education of the School's pupils).

The benefits of community partnership are evident for both the pupils and the local community and this Lettings Policy will further aid the successful integration of the School and the local and wider community.

It needs to be recognised, however, that the School is not resourced to operate as a community centre and that the financial resources devolved to the School on an annual basis cannot be used to underwrite the use of the building and resources by people other than the pupils. It will be necessary, therefore, to make a charge when letting the premises / resources that goes some way towards covering the cost of running the School, e.g. heating, lighting, caretaking and management costs.

The detail of the attached policy will be reviewed annually by the School's Governing Body.

Scale of Charges

A guideline scale of charges for the hire of premises is to be found attached {Appendix I}. Governors will review and monitor these charges.

The Governors, therefore, intend to charge for letting and loans using a permutation of factors which reflect: -

- a) whether or not the hirer is a Knowsley MBC user, e.g. another school
- b) if the use of the resource is in or out of school hours
- c) whether the site manager's overtime is required
- d) which resources are being hired
- e) the length and regularity of the letting

The Governing Board will decide on the appropriate scale of charges having taken the above factors into consideration.

The Headteacher and the School Business Manager will make consideration of requests for use of the premises, and charges to be levied. The hiring of resources / premises will be reported to Governors at regular intervals.

All requests for payment of hire charges will be made by invoice. All payments will be receipted and credited to the school's budget share in accordance with the LA Financial Regulations and the School's Finance policy.

Charges will also be made to cover any external administration / photocopying requests, including Freedom of Information requests (see Appendix I).

Breakfast Club

From September 2023 Breakfast Club is charged at £3.00 per day, £2.00 for siblings.

After School Club

From September 2023 After School Club is charged at £10.00 per day.

Charges will be reviewed by Governors on an annual basis.

Confirmation of Letting

Users will be required to sign a contract of use which will include reference to health and safety procedures {Appendix II}

Health and Safety

All users of the school's facilities will be required to adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which can be found in the school staff room and on the school website.

The attention of users is drawn particularly to the arrangements for Fire Evacuation. Fire exits and exit routes are clearly marked using green information signs. Red "break glass" Fire Alarms are also positioned throughout the school.

A copy of the emergency procedures, including fire regulations for the relevant areas, will be included with the confirmation of letting form {Appendix III}

Any person or group hiring school facilities will be required to have suitable insurance arrangements to cover accident, injury, loss or damage to property and an indemnity form must be signed {Appendix IV}

Areas / Resources Relevant to the Letting Policy

Hall and Learning Support Room

The Hall is available for hire by individuals or groups by prior arrangement with the Headteacher or School Business Manager. It can be booked for whole days, half days, twilight or evening sessions, subject to availability and the convenience of the school. TV / video and /or projection facilities can be made available but notice must be given at the time of booking.

Refreshments

Tea and coffee will be available and charged as detailed in the hire rates {Appendix I}. Approximate numbers must be quoted on the confirmation of lettings form.

IT equipment

This range of equipment is available for staff use only in order to assist them in becoming more familiar with the potential of the equipment and to assist them in preparing for teaching or with administrative matters. Items may only be loaned after prior agreement with the Headteacher and after completion of an equipment loans form. {Appendix V}

Charging for Educational Visits and Activities

This policy statement should be read in conjunction with the advice and definitions contained in DCFS updated guidelines January 2009 (see Appendix VI). Under the Education Reform Act of 1989, schools have to draw up a policy with regard to charging for educational visits and activities. Schools are not allowed to charge for educational visits and activities that take place during school hours.

Voluntary contributions

It will be necessary to seek a voluntary contribution from parents to cover the cost of entrance fees, transport and insurance etc.

- No one will be obliged to contribute.
- No child will be excluded from the visit or activity.

However, if school cannot raise the required amount then the visit or activity may have to be cancelled due to lack of alternative funding.

Educational trips and activities taking place out of school hours may be charged to the parents. If the visit or activity is residential, then parents of participating pupils will be asked to bear the cost of board and lodging. Children who attract Pupil Premium are eligible for assistance with the cost of trips.

School fund

The school runs a school fund which is used to raise money by fund raising and which also attracts charitable donations. It has been agreed that monies raised in this way may be used to partly or wholly support activities for pupils both during and out of school hours, and to promote community cohesion. The school fund accounts are audited on an annual basis and are available for scrutiny.

**St Aloysius Catholic Primary School CHARGING / LETTING
RATES 2023 / 2024**

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACILITY HIRE					
	WITHIN SCHOOL HOURS				
	Full Day	Half Day	4.00pm to 6.00pm		
A. Hire of Internal areas	£100.00	£50.00	£35.00		
Hire of external areas	TBC	TBC			
B. Caretaking	Nil	Nil			
C. Heating and Lighting	Nil	Nil			
D. Refreshments (Tea/Coffee and biscuits)	£1 per person per serving i.e. on arrival / during meeting				
ADMINISTRATION DUTIES					
A. Hourly Rate	£15.00 per hour plus costs of materials				
B. FOI requests	10p per copy				
PHOTOCOPYING CHARGES					
A4	Black & White		15p/copy		

A3	Black & White	25p/copy
A4	Colour	30p/copy
A3	Colour	50p/copy

Appendix II

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

CONFIRMATION OF LETTING

Date:

Dear _____

Name of Group Hiring _____

Hire of Centre Facilities Reference / Invoice number _____

I confirm that your application for use of the Centre premises / resources as detailed below have been agreed:

Accommodation to be used	
Start Date	
End Date	
Start Time	
End Time	
Day of the week	
Number of occasions	
Refreshments required : times required and number to be served	
Number of people involved	

I enclose a copy of the emergency procedure, including fire regulations for the relevant area(s). All those taking part in or attending your activity must be made familiar with the action to be taken in the event of an emergency.

The cost of hiring is £.....and an invoice is attached. Payment must be made in full prior to the event unless a prior arrangement has been made.

The hirer must be over 18 years of age and shall be the person who signs this form of confirmation for hiring. The person shall be responsible for payment of the cost of hiring and for the observance of the conditions and stipulations in the codes of practice.

The Governors reserve the right to refuse an application for hiring without giving a reason. The Governors also reserve the right to refuse access to the premises hired if the whole of the fees have not been paid or if the regulations have not been complied with.

In the event of damage occurring during the hiring, the hirer is responsible for the cost of making good the damage caused.

Please sign and return the attached Indemnity Form as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

S Wrigley
Headteacher

Appendix III

Emergency Procedures

Fire

Any person discovering a fire should sound the alarm by breaking the glass of the fire alarm button.

On hearing the alarm, staff should gather the children in an orderly line and take them out of the building by the route shown by the nearest fire exit route. Fire exit routes are also marked and should be followed if the preferred route is blocked. The safe areas are:

- The playground
- The car park
- The field depending on the exit route taken.

The fire muster point is on the school playground.

Bomb threat

Unfortunately the fire alarm cannot be sounded intermittently (10 short bursts then constant) which is the general alarm for bomb threats and so the alarm will be sounded and procedures followed as for fire.

Appendix IV

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

Indemnity Form

I / We accept free / paid use of _____
St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

I / We understand that it is a condition of use that the School and Knowsley MBC are absolved from any liability for any accident, injury, loss or damage to property incurred by an individual.

I / We have suitable insurance arrangements to cover accident, injury, loss or damage to property.

Signed _____

On behalf of _____

Date _____

Signed on behalf of St Aloysius. _____

Date _____

Appendix V

ST ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SEMI-PERMANENT EQUIPMENT LOAN

STAFF NAME: _____

Start Date _____

Length of Loan Period _____

DETAILS OF EQUIPMENT:

Equipment Make/Model

Serial Number

Tag number _____

Purpose of Loan _____

I agree to be responsible for the equipment listed above for use off site between the dates stipulated. Any loss or damage to the property will be covered by my personal insurance arrangements, or the cost of said loss or damage will be forwarded by me to the school. I will notify the Headteacher immediately should any problems arise relating to the equipment.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Approved by _____ (HT, DH, member of SLT or SBM)

Date returned _____ (to be completed when item(s) returned)

Checked by _____ (HT, DH, member of SLT or SBM)

APPENDIX VI

CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Produced by: Fair Access Division
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Contents Page:

Introduction	Page 1
Education	Page 1
Optional extras	Page 2
Voluntary Contributions	Page 3
Residential Visits	Page 3
Music tuition	Page 4
Transport	Page 4
Charging policies	Page 5
Remissions policies	Page 5
Education partly during school hours	Page 5
Non-residential visits	Page 5

CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to help head teachers and governing bodies set out their policies on charging and remission for school activities and school visits.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. This guidance has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in “A Guide to the Law for School Governors” (Chapter 23). This guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms. This guide is also referred to in paragraph 1.82 in the School Admissions Code, and in para 1.97 in the revised School Admissions Code (in force from 10/2/09).

Schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 4 of this guide of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Education

School governing bodies and local authorities **cannot** charge for:

- an admission application to any maintained school;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum¹, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;

¹ It should be noted that ‘part of the National Curriculum’ is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum ‘inclusion statement’ (e.g. developing teamwork skills).

- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school¹.

Schools and local authorities **can** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4).

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. **Optional extras are:**

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the National Curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;

¹ However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents.

- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher **must** also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be. Children who attract Pupil Premium are eligible for assistance with the cost of trips.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. Schools should also ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents when requesting for contributions.

Residential Visits

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;

- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- An income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit and have an annual income of £16,190 or less
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. Guidance about these changes to the charging regulations can be viewed at:

<https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/g/guidance%20charging%20regulations%20for%20music%20tuition%20-%20july%202007.pdf>

Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

Transport

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Charging and Remissions Policies

No charges can be made unless the governing body of the school or local authority has drawn up a charging policy giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for, and a remissions policy.

The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). This information should be made available to parents.

The remissions policy must set out any circumstances in which the school or local authority propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging policy. For example, a school may decide to provide an Italian language evening class as an optional extra. The governing body may decide to reduce the cost for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Non-residential activities

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.

Residential visits

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.

Example 1: Visit during school hours

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Questions and Answers

Q What is a charging policy?

A Under the charging provisions set out in legislation, governing bodies and local authorities of maintained schools may choose to charge for certain defined activities, but only if they have first drawn-up charging and remissions policies. These policies should be made available to parents on request.

Q A visit involving staying overnight has been arranged for children at my school. Can the school charge for this?

A Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home the school is allowed to make a charge for board and lodging. This is with the exception of pupils whose parents are receiving:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- An income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit and have an annual income of £16,190 or less
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit

- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Since April 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria. The head teacher must inform all parents of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving these benefits.

Q. With regard to the remission of board & lodging payments, can you please explain who pays for the expense, would it come out of the school budget or is there a grant available to claim?

A Although the criteria for being eligible for the remission of charges for board and lodgings is the same as free school meals, that is where the similarity ends. The costs involved in the remission of board and lodgings are to be borne by the school from their contingency funds. There is no return to be completed to re-claim the money back.

Q Our school has a large number of pupils eligible for free school meals, this means that they would also receive remission for board and lodgings expenses for residential school visits. How can the school fund/organize residential visits?

A The government provides funding for schools to each local authority according to a formula which recognises the different needs of each area. The same basic funding is provided for all comparable pupils across the country. This is then topped up according to local needs.

One of these top-ups reflects the numbers of pupils in a certain area living in deprived circumstances, as these pupils need extra help if they are to have an equal opportunity in life. The amount that individual schools receive from the local authority reflects their relative need compared with other local schools, through the locally agreed funding formula. All local authorities' funding formulae are required to include an element to reflect the needs of deprived pupils. It is for head teachers and school governing bodies to decide how to spend their available resources.

Schools cannot exclude children from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make, a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

If there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

Q Can governing bodies charge for educating children in maintained schools?

A. The local authority or governing body cannot charge for education that takes place in school hours. Nor can they charge for activities that take place outside school hours if these are part of the National Curriculum, necessary as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. They can charge for permitted 'optional extras', provided they have drawn up a statement of general policy on charging and given details of 'optional extras' they intend to charge for. The

governing body's policy does not have to be the same as the local authority's policy, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

Q Can a school charge for an activity that takes place out of school hours?

This kind of activity is often referred to as an 'optional extra'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. See guidance on optional extras.

The actual charge for the optional extra cannot exceed the actual cost of the provision. Schools cannot and must not make a profit from charging for optional extras. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Q Can a school ask parents for voluntary contributions?

A Schools may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. It should be remembered that education provided during school hours must be free. This includes materials, equipment, and transport provided in school hours by the local authority or by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. Governing bodies should also clearly explain that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently, and that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

Q The school has sent letters out to parents asking for contributions towards a school visit, do parents have to pay?

A Head teachers or governing bodies may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;
- school equipment; and school funds generally.

Children of parents who are unable, or unwilling, to contribute may not be discriminated against. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of the visit, or activity, and there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall, then the school should cancel the activity/visit. It would be advisable to make parents aware of a possible cancellation to the activity/visit if insufficient voluntary contributions are received from the outset.

Q What happens if the school is not able to raise enough voluntary contributions to cover costs?

A Where there are not enough voluntary contributions, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, for example school funds and/or fundraising activities, then it must be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions should be made clear in the information sent to parents.

Q What if a parent is unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution? How does this affect their child(ren)?

A The school cannot exclude a child from taking part in an activity that is part of the National Curriculum purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

Q What support can a school offer a parent/carers who has difficulty making a financial contribution?

A Schools must ensure that parents in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2014/15). Some schools also have funds available to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. Parents should be encouraged to speak to the head teacher in order to establish if such funding arrangements exist.

Children who attract Pupil Premium are eligible for assistance with the cost of trips.

No charge may be made if there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination. In addition, if the activity is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel for any pupil, not just those whose parents are in receipt of benefits.

Q What about charges for transport during school hours?

A Any transport provided by the school in school hours will be provided free of charge (though a voluntary contribution could be requested).

Q Can the school charge for something like cooking ingredients or materials needed for a technology lesson?

A The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

Q Can the school charge entry fees for examinations?

A An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it; and

- a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Q. Can a school make a charge to pay for the administration required as part of the admission process?

A. Para 1.82 of the current School Admissions Code and para 1.93 of the revised School Admissions Code (which comes into force in February 2009) rules out practices that can lead to covert selection, such as asking parents for a financial contribution as a condition of entry. We are clear that schools cannot ask for a voluntary contribution as part of the admissions process and where this is found, we will not tolerate it. Legislation prevents maintained schools from charging fees for admission or for providing education during school hours.

Q. Can a school ask for a direct debit to the school fund?

A. No. A school may ask for voluntary contributions, as long as it is clear that they are voluntary, but we are clear that state education should be free and we have no intention of changing this policy. We will not tolerate this when it is brought to our notice. No contributions may be sought as part of the admissions process.