



The Shepwell Short Stay School

Charging Policy

Statement of Intent

As a general statement, Walsall council and Shepwell Short Stay School wishes to state that it is the right of every pupil to receive free (to parents/carers) alternative education and that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

Whilst recognising that the Education Reform Act gives centres the discretion to charge for optional extras provided wholly or mainly out of school hours and to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours, the council nevertheless, trusts that schools will not abuse this power and that they will always take particular account of pupils whose families are suffering financial hardship.

Schools are expected to base their decisions on educational grounds and to ensure that any activities which are deemed to take place mainly or wholly in centre hours do not disrupt pupils' education.

Aims of this policy

- For the Shepwell Short Stay School to provide the best education it can for the pupils, using all staff most effectively and resources most efficiently.
- To ensure that the Shepwell Short Stay School will only insist on payment where this is considered necessary.

Practical Subjects

Where parents have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, the Shepwell School may make a charge. The charge shall not exceed the cost of the materials used by the pupil.

Transport

Where a pupil travels direct from home to a place of work experience and vice versa, parents may be asked to meet the cost of such travel, except that no charge should be made in respect of pupils whose families are in receipt of Income Support or Family Credit. Where activities of this sort are organised by the centre, the centre will be expected to meet the travelling costs of these pupils.

Optional Extras

A charge may be made for optional extras provided wholly or mainly outside school hours except where such activities are provided:-

- To fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination.
- Specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the national curriculum.
- Specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to Religious Education.

Participation in optional extras will be based on parental choice and prior confirmation in writing is required from the parents that they are willing to pay charges. The charge per head cannot exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of participating pupils, and may include elements for-

- A pupil's travel costs.
- A pupil's board and lodging costs.
- Entrance fees to museums, castle, theatres etc
- Insurance costs.

Board and Lodging

A charge may be made for board and lodging in connection with residential activities. The charge cannot exceed the actual cost of providing board and lodging and prior written confirmation from the parent is required that he/she is willing to pay the charge.

Where a residential activity is deemed to take place in centre hours or take place outside centre hours but is covered by the criteria above, no charge for board and lodging will be made in respect of pupils whose parents are in receipt of Income Support. Where such activities are organised by a centre, the centre shall bear the cost of board and lodging for these pupils.

While the Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre continues to be used by the Authority for activities deemed to take place in centre hours or to take place outside centre hours but are covered by the criteria above, the Authority will make no charge for transport for any pupil, but will charge pupils other than those whose families are in receipt of Income Support 55% of the cost of board and lodging.

Tuition in a Musical Instrument (except where the criteria above apply)

Whilst group tuition remains free, the Authority will make a charge for individual musical instrumental tuition, whether inside or outside centre hours. Prior written confirmation must be obtained by the centre from the parents that they are willing to pay the charge.

The charge will include the cost of the teacher (based on a pro-rata calculation of his salary) and, where appropriate, the cost of sheet music and hire and insurance of the instrument. The charge will be collected by the centre and forwarded to the Authority.

The Authority will continue to exercise its discretion whether or not to give grant assistance towards the cost of advanced tuition for individual pupils provided by either institutions not under the Authority's control or individuals not employed by the Authority.

Public Examinations

Examinations will be paid for by mainstream school. There will be a SLA between Shewpell School and the mainstream school.

Damages or Breakages

A pupil responsible for non-accidental damage to school property, such as books, equipment, windows etc, will render the parent liable for the cost of repair or replacement. In cases of accidental damage to personal property within school application to be made to the Headteacher to cover full payment at his discretion or refer to the Chair of Governors if the claim is considered to be excessive.

In any matter of dispute arising over interpretation, the Governors will be guided by the DfES and the County Council regulations currently in use.

Debtors Write Off Policy

The scheme for financing centres allows the Management Committee to recommend write off debts to a maximum limit of £1000. In such cases, details must be forwarded in the first instance to the Chief Education Services Officer or equivalent.

The list will subsequently be forwarded to the Head of Financial Services who is the Council's delegated officer for writing off such debts. A formal list for write off will then be prepared and actioned. Debts of over £1000 proposed for write off will be the subject of a report to Education Committee and subsequently Policy and Resources Committee. Therefore, the Management Committee will be required to write to the Chief Education Services Officer detailing the debt and requesting that a report be prepared. For operational efficiency, the Management Committee will delegate the responsibility of debt write offs under £100 to the Head of Centre. For debts under this value, information should be forwarded to the Management Committee retrospectively.

Private Use of Facilities

It is unlikely that the entire school would be assessed as unsuitable or impractical for community use. However, if certain areas of the school are not suitable or practical for others to use then there is no need to make them available.

Several elements should be taken into account in calculating the actual costs of a letting. Apportioning costs may be difficult and it may be necessary to simply estimate these. The actual costs to the school will vary at different times and this should be reflected in the charges. These should include:

Premises management	The Head will to agree the hours and service required from the Premises staff for each letting. These may vary from simply unlocking the premises at the start and locking up at the end to attendance throughout the function.
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Cleaning	The funding and published charges for schools in Walsall does not allow for any additional cleaning that is required as a result of external letting. The cleaning services could provide an estimate for any extra work required.
Equipment Hire	Basic equipment will be included in the premises cost. Specialist equipment may be hired separately; VAT must be paid on any equipment hire.
Heating and light, and wear & tear	These can be calculated from the known annual energy budget, and an estimate of the percentage of the school used for the letting. The charge could be higher in winter months to reflect the additional heating required.
Management, administration	It would be appropriate to include an element for other costs incurred by the school in managing lettings (management and administration, insurance, etc) in calculating the overall cost of a letting.

Examples

Cost of letting school hall for 2 hrs during school hours (e.g. 3pm- 5pm)

Premises management costs (nil)	£10
Cleaning - no additional cost as will be cleaned as per normal, after letting	£0
Heating/lighting & wear/tear (nominal charge at £2.00/hr; estimate)	£5
Administration cost	£10
Total actual cost	£25

Cost of letting school hall for 2hrs out of school hours (e.g. 7.30 - 9.30pm), including hire of specialist equipment

Premises management costs @ £15.50 per hour (at time and half, including on-costs) This will be less if there is more than one letting at the same time	£31.00
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Cleaning - additional cost as needs cleaning before and after activity; additional 1/2 hr @ standard rate; £9.43/hr inc on costs	£10.00
Hire of equipment - £10 to cover wear and tear	£10.00
Heating/lighting & wear/tear [£4.00/hr during evenings when heating & lighting not otherwise on; estimate]	£8.00
Administration cost	£10.00
Total actual cost	£68.00

Complaints Procedure

All parents / carers will receive a copy of the Shepwell School complaints procedure prior to the child attending the school. Any complaints will be investigated via the Shepwell School complaints procedure. The policy is available on the school website www.shepwellschool.co.uk

Relevant Policies

Other Shepwell School policies that cross reference with this one are:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Complaints Policy

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