

Excerpt from the School Admissions Code

The full code is available at www.dfes.gov.uk/sacode

Other policies

School uniform

1.80 School uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos and setting the tone of a school, and the Government strongly encourages schools to consider the introduction of uniforms where they do not already have them. Governing bodies should help limit the expense of uniforms so that parents on low incomes do not feel that the prospective cost of the uniform means that they cannot apply for their preferred school.

Governing bodies should ensure that the uniform chosen is widely available in high street shops and other retail outlets, and internet suppliers rather than from an expensive sole supplier. They can use their own purchasing power to buy in bulk and pass on savings to parents. Governing bodies should not seek to operate as sole suppliers in order to raise additional funds through the sale of new school uniforms.

1.81 All schools which have a uniform policy should have arrangements in place to ensure that no family feels unable to apply for admission on account of high uniform costs. This applies equally to sports kits and any other specialist equipment outlined in the policy. Schemes for remission of cost should cover children eligible



for free school meals, and children whose parents are entitled to the maximum level of working tax credit. Schemes should be administered discreetly so that no parent is embarrassed to ask for help. These schemes should be widely publicised and clearly explained in admissions, or other, literature provided by the school¹.

Contributions to school funds and contributions to participate in school trips

1.82 Admission authorities and governing bodies must make it clear in their admission arrangements that there is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to a school. Schools should not imply in their prospectus and in other documents that donations and voluntary contributions are expected. Parents from low-income families sometimes express concern about the level of voluntary contributions that schools request or require and may be deterred by these from expressing a preference for the school for their child.

1.83 School trips are an important part of school life and can contribute to the ethos of the school. However, some parents may not want their children to go away from home or to take part in school trips. Governing bodies must not imply that such trips are compulsory and as a result discourage some parents from applying for a place at the school.





1.84 Parents may also be concerned about the cost of school trips and other extracurricular activities, fearing that their child may not be able to participate and this may discourage them from applying for a place at the school. Accordingly, schools should make it clear where help may be available for those unable to afford the cost of school trips. They must make it clear that any contribution to school funds and voluntary contributions to trips are not mandatory, and that the expectation is that low income families will contribute a small amount, or nothing. Parents must be assured that they will not be asked to explain why they prefer not to contribute and that not contributing will in no way disadvantage their child.

1.85 A charge must not be made for a school trip :

- a) that is during school hours; or
- b) is outside school hours but it is being undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, or as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination².

1.86 A charge may be made for board and lodging on residential trips but the charge must not exceed the actual cost, and children in receipt of free school meals are exempt. Schools may, however, ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of board and lodging.

1 Further guidance on school uniforms can be accessed at: www.parentscentre.co.uk/educationandlearning/schoollife/schooladministration/uniforms

2 The EA 1996 (Sections 449–462), as amended by the SSFA 1998 and the EA 2002, sets out the legislative basis for school charging and remissions policies. Section 200 of the EA 2002 amended the legislation that deals with the remission of charges (board and lodgings) for residential school trips, set out in section 457 of the EA 1996. The Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information)(England) Regulations 1999, (SI 1999/ 2255), places obligations on head teachers, school governing bodies and LEAs to make information available about charging and remissions policies.

