



Manor Green Primary Academy

'We are the future - the world is in our hands.'

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to you to clarify the position of the academy on school trips/ educational visits. The academy is bound by the DFE guidance and the policies of Focus-Trust also reflect this.

The DFE guidance "Charging for School Activities" published in 2008 (this is the latest update) states the following:

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, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure 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.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, 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 and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions. (p.6 of "Charging for School Activities"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>)

The Focus-Trust Policy for Charging and Remissions reflects the above statements:

2.1 The Focus-Trust reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by an academy...

2.1.1 School trips and residential visits in school time:

3 Voluntary contributions

3.1 Nothing in this policy statement precludes the governing body from inviting parents to make voluntary contributions. The governing body should make clear that such contributions are voluntary and those children of parents who do not contribute will not be discriminated against, and that if insufficient contributions are received the trip/event may be cancelled.



Part of the Focus Academy Trust



Whilst I completely understand and agree with the frustration of a number of parents at the recent cancellation of some educational visits, the academy CANNOT only take the children who have paid. This is illegal.

We plan the trips twelve months in advance to give lots of notice for payment, unfortunately this does mean that children are also aware, well in advance, of the planned opportunities. Parent Pay has the facility to pay a small amount each week to allow for budgeting. In addition to this, following recent feedback, we now:

- Provide a weekly update via our trips tracker on the school newsletter
- Send text reminders
- Contact parents who have not yet paid to discuss any individual circumstances
- Subsidise the cost of the school trips for each year group by £150 from your contributions to Friends of Manor Green
- Include a rider referencing the need to contact us if there are any issues with voluntary payment which links to the policy statement below:

3 Remissions

3.1 Pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain support payments may be eligible for further remissions. The governing body invites parents to apply, in the strictest confidence, for the remission of charges in part or in full. The Principal will authorise remission in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

3.2 As a general rule, where the governing body assists in the meeting of costs it will not give a 100% subsidy in order to ensure that parents share a commitment to the activity concerned. (Focus Trust Charging and Remissions Policy)

Unfortunately, our school budget is not in a position to further subsidise educational visits and we always discuss these visits with Friends of Manor Green. Whilst we appreciate the generosity of small groups of parents who have previously offered to make up the shortfall for trips, we cannot morally expect this to be the case at all times.

We do not like to have to cancel trips as our core purpose is not to disappoint children, it is to provide them with a broad and balanced curriculum which has as many first-hand experiences as possible. These unfortunately, are not free. Every avenue is explored and everything within our power is exhausted to avoid disappointing children by having to cancel a trip.

Should any parents have any further ideas how we can remedy this issue in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school address.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs D Warren
(Principal)