

14.0 Financing

The advice below is purely generic. Any financial arrangements between the Local Authority and schools/Youth facilities may vary over time and for different services. It is therefore advisable to contact the LEA or Youth Services if there is any doubt regarding Educational Visit or activity funding arrangements.

14.1 CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

This is largely determined by the Education Reform Act 1988. The underlying principle is that education which is provided wholly or mainly (the guideline is 50%) during school hours should be free of charge. Although there is no legal obligation, parents can be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards an educational visit or an activity but a maintained school can not exclude any pupils through parent's inability or unwillingness to pay.

Head Teachers can recommend an amount of voluntary contribution to be made but must explain to parents it cannot insist that any amount is paid. It must also be explained that the pupil cannot be prevented from taking part if the contribution is not paid fully or at all. To counter the risk of insufficient funds it should be explained to parents that if contributions are not made, the visit or activity may not be possible. Money required for contingency funds for potential use in emergency situations can be included in the overall costs of an activity or Educational Visit.

When charging the following principles apply: -

- Educational visits or activities out of school hours which are not part of the national curriculum or prescribed public examinations can be charged for in total as 'optional extras'.
- Educational visits or activities out of school hours which are part of the national curriculum or prescribed public examinations can only be charged for board and lodgings (as the school would not normally be expected to provide this) although voluntary contributions can be made towards total costs.

It is necessary to establish that the visit or activity represents value for money: -

- Charging is made within the scope of the Education Reform Act 1988.
- The costs should be reasonable and within the scope of the majority of families.
- Alternatives to charging where possible should be considered, e.g. via the school budget or by community or local sponsorship.

14.2 CHARGING FOR ADULTS

The exact staff to pupil ratio should be decided by the generic guidance within this document, advice from the LEA, as well as a result of risk controls identified in the visit or activity risk assessment. If adults/Group Supervisors are to be taken beyond these requirements they should not be directly or indirectly subsidised by the parents of the visit group. This does not preclude a Group Supervisor/Group Leader job-share being arranged so that part of the payment is agreed on a voluntary basis. Any free places being offered by a commercial company subsidising or funding a visit or activity should be taken by qualified/experienced members of staff who are directly contributing to the pupil/staff ratios.

14.3 SURPLUS FUNDS

If following an Educational Visit or activity there is a surplus of funds; the money should be returned as an equal share to each contributor, pro-rata for those that have made part payments, unless there is a clear declaration and written agreement (consent) on what the money will be used for. With written consent surplus monies would normally be placed in the school visit fund or used to support other ventures.