

# ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## POLICY STATEMENT ON CHARGING AND REMISSIONS.

### INTRODUCTION

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies in respect of charging for School Activities. It is in accordance with Government legislation and emanates from the School's Mission Statement and supports the School's Equal Opportunities Policy.

### OVERVIEW

The education we provide wholly or mainly during school hours will be free but on some occasions a 'voluntary' contribution towards the cost of an activity may be requested by the school. Parents are free to decide whether or not to contribute. This policy sets out the principles upon which the school will operate charges and remissions.

### PRINCIPLES

Headteachers or governing bodies may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of

- any activity that takes place during school hours
- school equipment
- general school funds.

Children of parents who are unable, or unwilling, to contribute may not be discriminated against. However, if there are insufficient voluntary contributions made to cover the cost of the trip, or activity, and there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall, then the school should cancel the activity.

### 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 Curriculum<sup>1</sup>, 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;

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

- 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;
- 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 school<sup>2</sup>.

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

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

### **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;

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<sup>2</sup> 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 pre-requisite 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. This must be made 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. This should make it clear to parents at the outset what our policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

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**. We will avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. We will 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 we inform parents about a forthcoming visit, we will 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 Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Guidance on school policies for Learning Outside the Classroom, including charging is available here.<sup>3</sup>

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.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lotc.org.uk/pdf/1.3.2%20Developing%20a%20LOtC%20policy.pdf>

## **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 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).

The school currently offers instrumental tuition to pupils at Key Stage 2 under a Service Level Agreement paid by the School. There is no charge for pupils to have this tuition, all costs are met by the school.

## **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.

Guidance on school travel is available **here**<sup>4</sup>.

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

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<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-00373-2007>

help with the cost (or even get it free). This information will be made available to parents.

### **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.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. The school will not levy any charges for routine activities which occur wholly or mainly within school hours.
2. The financing of special educational visits of a specific or general nature that take place whether in or out of School but within the School timetable, will rely upon voluntary contributions from parents.
3. The School will cancel any planned venture if the uptake is insufficient and therefore, financially not viable.
4. No child will be disadvantaged or excluded from any activity because parents refuse or are unable to make a voluntary contribution.
5. When activities that do require extra financing are planned, parents will receive advance notice of the event including details of voluntary contributions.
6. The School will, when advertising a specific activity, request parents to signal their intention, usually on a pro-forma, whether or not they wish their child to participate and whether or not they are willing to make a voluntary contribution.
7. In the event of the visit being for a whole day, pupils in receipt of school meals will be provided with packed lunches.
8. The School will maintain detailed records of income and expenditure in respect of all educational visits.
9. No charges will be made for educational activities that occur outside school hours when such activities are part of the school's statutory duties regarding the delivery of the National Curriculum or the Religious Education of Pupils.
10. Schools can charge for board and lodging but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.
11. When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, it should be made clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the benefits outlined above will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

12. The total cost for a school visit including admission, transport, payment for adults and additional costs will be considered before requesting voluntary contributions from parents/carers.

### **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

1. When optional activities are arranged these will take place wholly or mainly outside school hours. Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges that are incurred.
2. In the event of a residential visit being arranged parents will be given early advanced notice and will be provided with the facility to make weekly contributions towards the costs.

### **CLUB ACTIVITIES**

Extra-curricular clubs and societies operate at various periods during the academic year.

All coaching and tuition provided by school-based staff is free of charge, as is transport to and from venues and stadia for competitive matches.

Coaching and activities from other providers may carry a charge.

The Before School Club should be self-supporting and parents are required to contribute towards the cost.

Copies of this information will be provided at the school for inspection by parents and other persons at all reasonable times on a school day and for distribution without charge to parents on request. This policy will be published on the school website and therefore will be freely accessible to all.

*Signed: Ms P McIlroy*

*Mrs M Hughes Chair of Governors*

Dated: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023