



St Mary's C of E Primary School

“St Mary’s is an inclusive school where we believe that all people are of equal value, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, ability or sexual identity. We recognise and respect their differences”.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Adopted at St Mary’s School: September 2015

Date for next review by Resources Committee: Autumn 2018

Signed:

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Reviewed: September 2015
Due for review: Autumn 2018

Charging and Remissions Policy

St Mary's C of E Primary School

At St Mary's Primary School, EVERY child matters

At St Mary's School we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular), independent of their parents' financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure that a good range of visits and activities is offered and at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The governors have agreed the following provisions with regard to charges for school activities, as required by the Education Act 1996.

This policy identifies activities for which;

- Charges will not be made
- Charges will be made
- Remission of charges may be made
- Separately from the matter of charging, how voluntary contributions may be sought
- When refunds may be made

1. School governing bodies and local authorities, cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any state funded school - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
- education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment (used during that time);
- education provided 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;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- 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

2. Charges will be made for;

- (i) Optional extras as defined by the Act (see below);
- (ii) Instrumental music tuition, either individually or in groups of any size, provided it is provided at the request of the child's parent and is not an essential part of the National Curriculum or is provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Charges for Musical Tuition

(England) Regulations 2007). Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

- (iii) Any book, instrument or equipment or materials, where the child's parent wishes them to own them. Any such charges will be subject to parents having indicated in advance their wish to own the book, instrument, equipment, or finished product.
- (iv) The governors will, where appropriate, ask parents to pay for damage to school property, or to property or equipment belonging to staff or pupils, when this damage is the result of their child's behaviour.

Optional extras include:

- 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 (other than transport that is 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);
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit (N.B. see 3. Remission of Charges for exemptions)
- extended day services offered to pupils (e.g. breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

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;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching staff;
- 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 an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, 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 prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

3. Remission of Charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Governing Body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges are legally permitted, will be offered at no charge, or a reduced charge, to parents in particular circumstances.

When parents are informed about of a forthcoming visit, it will be made 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 for residential trips:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

The Local Authority operates a remission policy in relation to fees for individual instrumental or vocal tuition. Details of the current scheme can be found by visiting <http://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/remission/> No charge will be made for music tuition in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Parents/carers who feel they have other special circumstances requiring assistance with payment will be offered an appointment to discuss these with the head teacher. The final decision with regard to assistance payments lies with the head teacher.

4. Voluntary Contributions

Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions towards the cost of;

- an activity which takes place during school hours, including non-curriculum activities and the cost of travel for educational/residential school visits
- school equipment
- school funds generally

It will be made clear from the outset that the contribution is genuinely voluntary and that there is no obligation to contribute. In relation to activities, other than optional extras outside school hours, the pupils of parents or guardians who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Where there are insufficient voluntary contributions

to make an activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. The school will not send colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit/standing order mandates will not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

5. Refunds

Where an activity makes an unexpected surplus, the school will consider making a refund. In accordance with the guidance set out in the HCC Financial Handbook for Schools, the school will offer a refund where the surplus is either;

- 5% or more of the original cost per person
- £5 or more per person.
- 20% or more of the cost for a day trip

If a child is absent for a trip, money will only be refunded for items priced on an individual basis, e.g. entrance fees. Money will not be refunded for items which have a flat rate which is divided between the number of children going on the trip e.g. Coach fares.

Surpluses will be reimbursed in whole pounds only. Where a refund is offered, the accompanying letter will indicate that "A surplus of £x has been made and that if the parent / guardian would like to take advantage of it, they should contact the office by a date "x" weeks in advance. If the school is not contacted by that date it will assume that the refund has been donated to school funds".

All refunds will be made by cheque, in order to maintain a clear audit trail. Refunds donated to the school will be transferred to an appropriate budget heading.

***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.

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. e.g. 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.

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.

Residential visits

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:

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:

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.

Additional Considerations

The Governing Body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we

- will publish the notification of school trips and their approximate cost as far in advance as possible so that parents / carers can plan ahead
- have established a system for parents to pay in instalments for residential trips
- acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "First come, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on low incomes, so we will avoid this method of selection.