



## **Charging & Remissions Policy** **January 2017**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996.
- 1.2 All schools are required to offer children a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for the opportunities and experiences of adult life.
- 1.3 In our school we seek to ensure that the National Curriculum is delivered to all children, regardless of social background, race, gender or differences in ability. All are entitled to the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.
- 1.4 To enrich the curriculum for our children, we also offer a residential trip to selected year groups that add to what they learn in school.
- 1.5 We wish to give equal opportunity to all our students, encouraging them to participate fully whilst at the same time recognising that a lack of voluntary contributions from parents for some activities which take place mainly or wholly in school hours may prevent those activities from taking place.

### **2.0 Aims of the Policy**

- 2.1 The aims of the policy are:
  - To define what the school cannot charge for
  - To define what the school can charge for
  - To clarify the position in respect of voluntary contributions
  - To define the school remissions/waived fees policy

### **3.0 Circumstances where charges must not be made**

- 3.1 Charges will not be made for the following:
  - Education provided during school hours (including the supply of materials, books, instruments or other equipment). There is an exception to this rule for residential trips and music tuition that are not part of the National Curriculum and are classed as 'optional extra's' (see Section 4 and Section 7).
  - Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or part of religious education.
  - Tuition for students learning to play a musical instrument if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum or is part of religious education.

- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours, with the exception of Residential Trips that are classed as optional extras. However, parents will be invited to make a voluntary contribution to make the trip viable and it may not take place if enough contributions are not received.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside of school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or is part of religious education.
- Transporting registered pupils to or from school premises.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises or on a trip, where the Governing Body or Local Authority has arranged for students to be educated.

#### **4.0 Circumstances where charges can be made**

4.1 The school can make charges for 'Optional Extra's' as follows:

- Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum or is the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).
- Any activity or trip that takes place wholly or partly outside of school hours and is not deemed to be an essential part of the National Curriculum. There is a formula for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside of school hours (see 'Charging for School Activities' guidance).
- Damage to property. The school will request a contribution towards the replacement of damaged equipment, premises or property which has resulted from unacceptable student behaviour.
- Materials, books, instruments, or other equipment where a parent indicates that they or the pupil wishes to own the finished article which incorporates the materials. Any charge will not exceed the cost of the materials.
- Transport or use of the school mini bus involving an 'optional extra' activity. School's may only make a charge if they hold a Section 19 Permit. Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running the vehicle, including loss of value. But the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit making activity, even if any profit would go into the school's other running costs or for charitable purposes.

#### **5.0 Charges relating to Optional Extra's**

5.1 Charges may be made in certain circumstances where there are optional extra's:

- Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and willingness to accept a charge for the costs. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of optional extra activities.
- At the discretion of the Head Teacher and in the interest of equality of opportunity, where parents are unable to meet the costs of the optional extra activity due to poverty or other special family circumstances, the cost of the activity **may** be met from the school fund.
- Any charge made in respect of individual students may not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra's activity (with the exception that charges may be rounded up to the nearest 50p or £1 for ease of payment & accounting). The

individual charge will comprise of the actual cost of the activity divided equally by the number of students taking place.

- In cases where a small portion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate.
- A charge will be made in respect of materials, books, instrument, equipment, ingredients and tuition fees for educational provision that is not part of the National Curriculum.
- A charge will be made for any transport or journeys that are undertaken in relation to optional activities.
- A charge will be made for residential trips that are not part of the National Curriculum (see section 7).

## **6.0 Charges Relating to Voluntary Contributions**

- 6.1 Charges may be made in certain circumstances relating to 'voluntary contributions'. The law allows schools to seek 'voluntary contributions' from parents to benefit the school or any school activity. The Governors have determined that certain conditions should be applied when seeking 'voluntary contributions for improving or developing facilities within the school or when planning an additional activity'.
- 6.2 It must be made clear at the outset that there is no obligation on parents to make 'voluntary contributions'. The cost can include travel, insurance, admission charges, administration charges, any food or refreshments to be purchased and any materials, books or equipment relating to the activity.
- 6.3 When asking for 'voluntary contributions', it must be made clear at the outset that should enough contributions not be received, then the activity will be cancelled.
- 6.4 No students will be excluded from a trip or activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to make a contribution.
- 6.5 The Governing Body & Head Teacher may apportion a part of the school fund with a view to discreetly subsidise families who are genuinely unable to pay voluntary contributions.
- 6.6 As the school has a number of parents who fall into the category of potentially being unable to pay all of the contribution due to genuine hardship, the school will apply agreed limits to the number of contributions and value of shortfall permitted to allow a trip to still go ahead. These limits are: a maximum of 7.5% of participating pupils not contributing, to a maximum value of £100. However, the Headteacher will have the discretion to raise these limits on an individual trip basis, taking into consideration the numbers of hardship cases involved and providing that the funds to subsidise are available.
- 6.7 The effect of the restriction on charging and of the fact that a child may not be prevented from going on a visit or taking part in an activity during school hours if the parents are unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, this may lead to certain visits becoming unviable. Where a trip or activity is planned on the basis of 'voluntary contributions' and insufficient funds are raised, then the trip or activity must be cancelled.

## **7.0 Residential Trips**

- 7.1 To enrich the curriculum for our children, we offer a residential trip to selected year groups that add to what they learn in school. The trip enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities and in team building exercises. All specialist activities are undertaken with qualified instructors.
- 7.2 These trips are not part of the National Curriculum but are offered as Optional Extra's.
- 7.3 Where children have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, we make a charge for board & lodging, insurance, travel, specialist instruction for certain activities and supplies & materials. The charges made for the trip will not exceed the actual cost incurred by the school.
- 7.4 The trip must be paid for in full a minimum of 3 months in advance of the trip taking place.
- 7.5 A monthly payment plan will be available; payments may be made ahead of time, including the whole amount, but should never be in arrears.
- 7.6 Some residential trips are booked through a registered travel company. If this is the case, once the numbers have been finalised and the deposit paid, changes to the booking (either to increase or decrease the numbers) cannot be made and the school is liable to pay the full charges for the number of pupils booked. In this instance, when booking their child on to a residential trip, the parent takes on the liability of paying for the entire costs of the trip, whether their child attends or not and cannot change their commitment for them to attend. This will be made clear to the parents in advance.
- 7.7 For residential trips that have not been booked through a registered travel agency, parents who decide that they would like their child to take part in a residential trip after the payment plan has started will need to catch up all payments to date before going on to the scheduled plan, to ensure that they are not in arrears. This includes pupils who join the school part way through the school year and is providing that the numbers of the trip can be increased.
- 7.8 Remissions/Waived Fees
- Parents entitled to free school meals for their children or whose children are entitled to Pupil Premium funding under the Ever 6 criteria are entitled to claim for the remission of the board & lodging element of the trip fees.
  - Parents who become eligible for free school meals for their children after they have signed up for the trip and started the payment plan may be entitled to claim remission of the board & lodging elements of the remaining payments, at the discretion of the Headteacher.
  - Parents who lose their eligibility for free school meals for their children after they have signed up for the trip may also lose their eligibility for the remission of fees and may need to make any remaining payments due. This will need to be discussed with the Headteacher.
  - Parents who are not entitled to claim free school meals for their children but feel that they have particular hardship circumstances that means they are unable to

make the monthly plan payments may discuss their case with the Headteacher. Remission of some of the board & lodging costs may be awarded to these parents on an individual basis at the discretion of the Headteacher.

### 7.9 Arrears

- Payments as part of the payment schedule should always be made on time and be received by the school by the set dates.
- Payments as part of the payment schedule should never be in arrears.
- Parents who are experiencing difficulties with the payments must contact the Headteacher to discuss this at the earliest opportunity.
- If payments fall in arrears by two payment schedule dates, the pupil will automatically be removed from trip without prior notification and the deposit and all costs incurred will be lost, unless prior discussions about difficulty meeting payment deadlines have taken place with the Headteacher.
- If a pupil has been removed from the trip due to payment arrears, refunds of payments other than the deposit, will not be issued until after the trip has taken place and it is confirmed that there will be no additional costs incurred by the school.

### 8.0 Swimming

- 8.1 The school organises swimming lessons for some pupils as part of the National Curriculum. We do not make a charge for these lessons but we do ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of them and the transport to the venue to ease the financial burden on school.

### 9.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Date: