



'Together we will do our best for Jesus'

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items or activities which the school will provide free of charge and those for which there may be a charge. The policy will be reviewed annually by the governors' finance committee.

The school day insofar as it applies to this policy is defined as 8.50am to 3.15pm (3:10pm for KS1). The mid-day break does not form part of the school day.

2.0 Overall Policy Statement

Education provided during the school day, which includes all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum together with religious education, is free of charge under the provision of the Education Reform Act 1988.

The Governing Body recognises that it is important to offer every child access to a wide range of additional activities including music tuition, clubs, trips and residential experiences available through the school. These activities make a valuable contribution to a pupil's personal and social development. Whilst we aim to make the minimum number of requests for money from parents/carers, the Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in certain circumstances.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning any activity that incurs a cost to the school and/or charges to parents, and any charge made will not exceed the cost per pupil of providing the activity.

Further details of how our charging policy relates to specific areas of provision are set out below.

3.0 Educational Visits

Each visit is carefully planned to support the delivery of the National Curriculum, but school trips are not a statutory requirement and therefore the school receives no delegated funding specifically to pay for this provision. With the exception of residential visits (see below), it is the school's policy that voluntary contributions will be sought from parents, to cover the cost of the activity and transport.

For each trip a letter will be sent home detailing the educational purpose of the trip and the estimated cost per pupil, and parents will be invited to return a permission slip indicating willingness or otherwise to make a voluntary contribution of any amount up to the full cost. Parents will be notified that if sufficient funds cannot be raised the trip may have to be cancelled.

No child will be excluded from an Educational visit on the grounds that their parents have not contributed.

4.0 Residential Trips

A charge will be made for any residential visits or overseas trips. Although the trip may take place during school hours, participation is optional and education will continue to be provided for any children remaining in school during the period of the trip.

5.0 Visitors/Special Events in School

From time to time the school may invite a non-school based organisation (such as a visiting theatre group) to arrange an activity on school premises during the school day. Where the activity does not form a necessary part of the National Curriculum, school will ask for a voluntary contribution. However no child will be excluded on grounds of cost.

6.0 Materials and Equipment

The school will normally provide free of charge any materials, equipment and transport required in order to deliver the National Curriculum. However, voluntary contributions, in the form of money or materials such as ingredients, may occasionally be sought from parents for activities where the end product is to be taken home (e.g. craftwork, design technology, food technology).

7.0 Responsibility for School Property and Library Books

The school may seek to recover from parents the costs of repairing or replacing any item of school property which has been wilfully damaged or lost.

Children may take reading books home, or borrow books to take home from the school library, but before they can parents must agree to either replace or pay £5 for any books lost or damaged..

The school may seek a £5 deposit for the use of a text book at home. This will be refundable upon return of the text book.

8.0 Extra-Curricular (Out of School Hours) Activities

Every effort will be made to provide extra-curricular activities free of charge whenever possible. However, the school is not permitted to subsidise extra-curricular activities from delegated government funding, and so must make a charge for some optional activities where costs are incurred. This policy draws a distinction between two types of extra-curricular provision: activities run by the school, and those run by external providers who use the school premises.

School Run Activities

In the case of school-run activities, any charge will be kept to a minimum and will be made only to cover costs where these are incurred. To minimise administration time and costs, payment of charges will usually be requested in advance as a termly or half-termly amount depending on the number of weeks for which a pupil signs up to participate, but in cases of hardship parents may make a request to spread the cost by paying weekly. Either way, payment must be received in advance of the session(s) and is non-refundable except in exceptional circumstances (see refund policy).

Clubs Run by External Providers

In the case of clubs run by external providers, these providers are independent of the school's charging policy and are permitted to set their own rates which they charge directly to parents, however the school will always seek to negotiate the best value arrangement on behalf of pupils. Furthermore, it is the school's policy that any income from letting the school's premises to these providers may be used to subsidise provision of school-led activities and to support the school's remissions policy.

9.0 Instrumental Music Lessons

The school makes a charge to parents for instrumental music lessons provided during school hours. The cost is the same for all children, regardless of which instrument they learn or how many other children share the lesson. The number of children sharing a lesson may vary, and will be determined by the music co-ordinator in liaison with the instrumental teacher, according to what best meets the educational needs of the children in that group; the decision will not be based on financial considerations. Fees are charged as a termly lump sum to be billed in advance at the beginning of each term, and payment must be received before lessons can be taken. Because peripatetic tuition must be booked well in advance, this represents a cost commitment by the school and therefore if a child wishes to cease lessons, notice must be given according to the terms of agreement which parents are asked to sign when they enrol their child for lessons. If the required notice is not received, the school reserves the right to charge a cancellation fee to help recover costs incurred by the school. This charge may however be waived if another child from the waiting list can fill the vacancy.

Parents/carers are responsible for providing the instrument and any tuition books and accessories needed, and also for meeting the cost of any examination fees (exams are however optional). To help parents with the sometimes quite considerable outlay required in purchasing an instrument, the school does have a policy for the assisted purchase of musical instruments (see below). The school also has a small number of musical instruments available for loan to children who cannot afford to buy their own, subject to availability.

Assisted Instrument Purchase Scheme

The school may order a musical instrument on a pupil's behalf where it is to be used for instrumental lessons in school. This is a recognised scheme authorised by HM Revenue and Customs, and enables parents to purchase the instrument through the school in effect VAT-free. Parents will be notified of the scheme when their child signs up for instrumental lessons, and may apply to the School Office Manager for further details and an application form.

10.0 Remissions Policy

The school will always endeavour to provide activities free of charge whenever possible, and to set charges to minimum levels so as not to preclude children from accessing provision. However, in cases where a charge must be made, such as instrumental music tuition, the school has a remissions policy which aims, within the limitations outlined below, to offer assistance to some pupils.

Families in receipt of means tested state benefits including 'Free School Meals' (not Universal Infant School Meals (UIFSM)) are entitled to the following support:

- A school uniform clothing allowance up to the value of £15 per term
- Requests for voluntary contributions for educational visits and visitors will be set at 50% of identified cost per pupil
- Financial assistance of up to 50% towards the cost of residential trips
- Priority in the attendance of school run extra-curricular activities (no charge will be levied)

It is not possible to consider remission of charges for activities out of school hours which are run by external providers.

The remissions policy will be financially supported from the school's own income generation activities and not by levying a higher charge on parents of other pupils.

11.0 Refund Policy

Parents may ask for a refund of voluntary contributions if their child misses a school trip due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. However, in cases where the school has already incurred a direct and non-recoverable cost in including the child on the trip (for example, purchase of a ticket which cannot be returned) then any such refund will be discretionary.

This refund policy does not apply to charges made for out-of-hours or optional activities, which are non-refundable except in the event of cancellation by the school. Where a child drops out of a school-led club or extra-curricular activity which has been paid for in advance, a discretionary refund may be considered for the unattended sessions only in exceptional circumstances and/or if the cost may be recovered by offering the place to another child.

Fundraising Activities

The school may hold events such as sponsor days during the year as a means of raising extra funds to support areas of provision not covered by the delegated budget, such as school trips and school-led extra-curricular activities. Funds raised in this way may also be used to support the school's remissions policy. All children will participate in these activities which take place during school hours, but sponsorship is of course voluntary.

The Parent, Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA) may also organise events throughout the year which parents are invited voluntarily to support.

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