

St Mary's CE High School

"Aspire – Challenge - Succeed"

Charging and Remissions Policy

Date of Review: Summer 2016
Date of next Review: Summer 2019

Signed: Chair of Governors
Signed: Head Teacher

St Mary's CE High School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out the charges that will be levied for activities, the remissions that will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents/carers.

This policy supports the overall objective of the school to optimise attainment for students and ensure that each child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

In keeping with our Christian ethos and our inclusive practice, we believe that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means. This charging and remissions policy's aim is to try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities offered to them. The policy will ensure that, during the school day, all students have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

The school day is defined as: 08.25hrs to 15.05hrs

Relationship to other school policies

The policy compliments the school's equality policy, curriculum policy, educational visits policy and the teaching and learning policy.

Chargeable and Non-Chargeable Activities

Charges will be made for

- optional extras eg extra activities provided mainly or wholly outside school hours as long as such activity is not an essential part of the school's curriculum.
(Note time spent on travel counts in this calculation if it occurs during school hours).

This could include costs of teaching and support staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra and any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra (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).

- residential trips (when not an essential part of the curriculum)
- visits outside school hours (eg more than 50% of the time) which can include travel costs; materials, books, instruments and other equipment; non-teaching staff costs; entrance fees to museums, theatres, castles, etc and insurance costs
- the board and lodging cost element (but only those costs) of residential trips (even when an essential part of the curriculum), which take place either outside or during school time. However, students, whose parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefits (see list on page 6), may apply to the Governors to request not to be charged for their child's board and lodging costs.
- work experience private placements (eg placements not taken up through the general placement scheme offered by the school to all students).
- musical instrument tuition for individual students or students in groups of up to four, as long as such teaching is not an essential part of the curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s) at St Mary's.

- the cost of materials or ingredients for Art, Design and Food, especially if parents have indicated in advance that they wish to receive the final product
- examinations
 - second and subsequent examination re-sit entry fees for GCSE, AS, A2 and other exams
 - the costs of re-marking any exam or a request for any exam script
 - late exam entry or withdrawal where the student/parent/carer is considered to be responsible
 - a charge for non-attendance at an exam without good reason
 - individual appeals by one candidate to the Board based on parental/student requests – payment must be made before the appeal is lodged
- daily transport to and/or from the school at the start/end of the school day using the school mini bus or vehicle hired by the school for such a purpose.
- wilful damage to school property, equipment or furniture or damage caused by inappropriate or negligent behaviour
- lost or damaged/defaced text books, exercise books and school issued equipment eg locker key, student card and lanyard, student planner etc
- lettings including Community use of school facilities
- provision of services to external parties eg training

No remission will generally apply to the above charges.

Charges should not exceed the actual cost (per student) of provision. No charge per student will be planned to exceed the actual costs incurred by that student, which means that students who can pay will not be charged extra to cover the costs of those who cannot afford to.

No compulsory charges will be made for

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment required to complete the course)
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at St Mary's
- tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school
- trips/fieldwork costs (including supply cover, transport costs etc.) if it is an essential part of the curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s) with the exception of the board and lodging element.
- non-curriculum based activities which take place inside school and when the school is actually in session (except musical instrument tuition).
- examinations
 - entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school (GCSE, AS, A2 and other exams)
 - first re-sit entry fees if the student has been prepared for it at the school (GCSE, AS, A2 and other exams)
 - absence from exams due to sickness or other authorised reasons

Note: If a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

Voluntary Contribution for Activities

The following will be applied in relation to voluntary contributions:

- voluntary contributions may be requested for any activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential
- there is no restriction placed on the specific use which can be made of such contributions
- there will be no obligation for parents and carers to contribute
- students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed
- it should be clearly stated in all letters to parent/carers that the activity/visit will only go ahead provided the necessary voluntary contributions are received and if these indicated contributions are not forthcoming then the activity will not take place. This will be kept under review and parents will be informed in writing of any changes as and when they are made.

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Head Teacher and the voluntary contributions will be used to offset the cost of the activity or event.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, the Governing Body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can be made may, at the discretion of the Governing Body, be offered at either no charge or a reduced charge to parents/carers in receipt of certain benefits (see benefits list on page 6).

The Governing Body may also remit charges in full or in part to other parents/carers in cases of exceptional hardship. The Governing Body invites parents to apply, in the strictest confidence, for the remission of charges in part or in full. The Head Teacher will authorise remission in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

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 try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- where possible the school will publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year, and at the earliest possible time, details will be provided for each individual trip, so that parents/carers can plan ahead
- the school has established a system for parents/carers to pay in instalments in appropriate circumstances
- the school acknowledges that offering opportunities on a “first pay, first served” basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and will avoid that method of selection
- the school will continue to monitor families that may be hard to engage/at risk of being hard to engage and support them in accessing additional resources that may increase participation of students from disadvantaged families.

- the school will request support or refer for additional support, students from families who may be entitled to additional resources eg Dewhurst Trust Grant,

Other circumstances where charges may be levied or voluntary contributions requested

Activities during the school day

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day; which entail additional costs, e.g. theatre company presentations. However, in these circumstances no student will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution.

From time to time the school may invite an independent non-school based organisation e.g. study skills trainers to arrange an activity during the school day. Such organisations may wish to charge parents/carers, who may, if they wish, ask the Head Teacher to agree to their child not taking part in the activity.

Optional activities outside of the school day

We may charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day, e.g. football skills schools, ski lessons. Such activities will not be part of the curriculum or of an examination syllabus.

Education partly during the school day

If the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal school day, charges may be made. When such activities are arranged parents/carers can obtain information as to how the charges have been calculated.

Examinations

The school, at its discretion, may charge for exam entries for qualifications outside of the qualifications being studied during lessons on a student's normal timetable.

School mini-bus or School Arranged Transport

Only the school's students, staff or parents/carers may travel at a charge in any of the school mini-buses. Charges can only be levied if the school has a permit issued by the LA under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. No permit is required if no charge is made to the user. Charges made for travel will seek to cover only actual costs incurred, including depreciation.

Charges for school arranged transport should be set at our level to seek to cover but not exceed costs.

School Meals

The Governing Body will determine and publish annually the prices to be charged for school meals.

School Lettings Rates

The Governing Body will determine annually the prices to be charged for school lettings.

Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the estimated or actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of students participating. There will be no additional levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot.

Support for cases of hardship can be made to the Governing Body's hardship fund. Parents/carers making a request for support would qualify for some support (subject to availability of funds) if the student(s) is in receipt of free school meals or where the parent/carer is in receipt of one of a recognised government benefit.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents/carers.

Arrangements for monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Date reviewed by the Finance Committee - 5th July 2016