



## **POLICY – CHARGING & REMISSIONS**

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### **Purpose and background**

The school wishes to make a broad programme of activities accessible to as many pupils as possible. This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the school budget. It also defines other circumstances when the school may wish to ask for voluntary contributions. The policy is written to comply with the relevant terms of the Education Act 1996, the Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999 and the Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989. It also states the school's policy for charging for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). This policy is implemented and managed by the Headteacher.

### **Policy objectives**

#### **Charging**

No pupil should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, the school reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed below. When charges are to be made the school reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place.

#### **Voluntary Contributions**

Where a charge cannot be made (as is often the case for activities which are an essential part of the curriculum, or religious education) parents may nevertheless be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The matter of a voluntary contribution will not be a factor in deciding whether a pupil is allowed to participate in an activity to be financed by voluntary contributions.

#### **Remissions**

The school will apply the statutory minimum remissions to any charges that they make (see appendix – DfE Charging for School Activities October 2014). However, no pupil shall be placed at an educational disadvantage because of a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute.

The DfE guidance explains on pages 7-8 that when a school informs parents about a forthcoming residential visit, it should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying for their child's board and lodging for non-chargeable school trips:

St Paul's whole school community (all staff, governors, parents and volunteers working in the school) are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. At St Paul's we recognize our duties under the Equality Act 2010. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- 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 the respective amounts for the financial year.
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income-related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008

In the case of particular need, remission outside these parameters will be at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

### **Information**

In line with the school's Publication Scheme on Information available under the FOIA, single copies of information will be provided free of charge unless specifically stated otherwise in the Publication Scheme. The costs of providing greater quantities of information may be charged to the recipient, these to be advised prior to the request for information being fulfilled. The decision to charge will be at the discretion of the Headteacher, except that where the costs exceed the "Threshold" as defined in the FOIA, the charge will be determined in line with the formula prescribed by the Act.

### **Liability for Personal Property**

The school does not accept liability for any items of Personal Property lost or damaged in school.

### **Associated Policies**

#### **Private Fund Policy**

Publication Scheme on information available under the FOIA

### **Practice and procedures**

Organisers of activities should be clear as to whether an activity falls within the parameters for charging or voluntary contributions:

A - Activities which are AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination

### **Charging**

It is not normally possible to charge for activities which are an essential part of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination.

Where a charge is allowed (see below), it should not exceed the cost that can be apportioned to the pupil's participation. If the cost of the chargeable element of an activity is expected to exceed the sum of the charges received, then the organiser should ensure funds to balance are available by reference to the Headteacher. The school may make a charge where the law permits it:

1. the cost of board and lodging for all residential activities,
2. musical instrument tuition for pupils if the teaching is not an essential part of the either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus,
3. activities that take place during lunch breaks,
4. the services of a non-school organisation employed during school hours,
5. any charges levied by the LA for services that it provides whilst applying the remission arrangements that the Authority considers appropriate,
6. materials used in the production of an article where the pupil's parent has indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the pupil, (NB where a parent declines to offer to pay for materials used in the production of an article where otherwise it would be expected that the pupil's parent would have indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the pupil then the pupil shall undertake the exercise but not be allowed possession of the article on completion).

### **Voluntary contributions**

These may be asked for, but this must be done in line with the stated objectives of this policy. Organisers of activities may ask for voluntary contributions to cover the costs of:

- travel
- materials, books and equipment
- teaching costs including supply cover
- associated administrative and support staff costs
- tickets and entrance fees
- payments to external organisations to deliver an activity on school premises (e.g. theatre workshops)

The organiser is expected to have constructed a balanced budget in advance. When arranging an activity, the voluntary contribution requested may be set to cover the direct cost per pupil, fixed overhead costs and where appropriate, with an allowance for a minimal contingency.

When writing to parents the benefit and educational aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated. A request for voluntary contributions must make it clear that:

- there is no obligation to make a contribution
- no pupil will be treated differently or not allowed to participate according to whether a contribution has been made,

- it may be necessary to cancel an activity if voluntary contributions received are insufficient to meet the costs of the activity.

B - activities available to our pupils that take place outside, or mainly outside, school hours that are NOT AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination ('extra-curricular activities')

### **Charging**

A charge may be levied in order to support the wide range of additional extra-curricular activities arranged by the school. Pages 4-5 of the DfE advice document explain that schools can charge parents for activities known as 'optional extras'.

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.

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.

The organisers of activities will normally determine a charge to cover the costs of:

- travel, board and lodging
- materials, books and equipment
- costs of staff paid to attend the activity (not supply cover)
- associated administrative and support staff costs
- tickets and entrance fees
- payments to external organisations to deliver an activity on school premises (e.g. theatre workshops).
- For an extra-curricular activity the charge should be set to cover the direct cost per pupil, fixed overhead costs and where appropriate, an allowance for a contingency to cater for any reasonable unforeseen shortfall in income or increase in expenditure.

When writing to parents the benefit and aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated (also cover any policy regarding remissions).