



ST. MARK'S CE SCHOOL

ONE SCHOOL - SERVING ALL - THROUGH EXCELLENCE

Charging Policy Statement and Guidelines

Policy Date: Summer 2023

Review Date: Summer 2024

Policy Statement: Charging

This policy refers to 'charging' in school.

Purpose

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' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities. (Where possible we shall publish a list of visits at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead.)

The Governing Body may not charge for anything unless they have drawn up a statement or general policy on charging. In general, no charge can be made for admitting students to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it must be free. However, the school may charge for activities outside of school hours where these are not a necessary part of the national curriculum. Pricing for these activities will be with consideration towards the community objectives of the school and may be subsidised (i.e. not recovering full cost) if deemed appropriate by the HR and Resources Committee.

A profit margin however may be included in pricing for activities outside of these objectives. The charging for individual activities is detailed in the points below:

1. Residential School Journeys

A residential school journey counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the students amount to half or more of the number of half days taken up by the activity.

Each school day is normally divided into 2 sessions and each 24 hour period is divided into 2 half days beginning at noon and at midnight. On this basis, a term time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday would last for 9 half days, including 5 school sessions, and would count as taking place in school time. A trip from noon on Thursday to 9pm on Sunday would count as 7 half days, including 3 school sessions and would be classified for charging as taking place outside school time. If 50% or more of a half day is spent on a residential trip you should treat the whole of that half day as spent on the trip.

(a) For residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

(b) The law allows parents to be charged the cost of boarding and lodging. In addition, all parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the other expenses of the residential school journey. There is no obligation for parents to pay this, and no students will be left out if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. The school may, however, have to cancel the activity if it does not have sufficient funds to cover the

costs.

(c) No charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

(d) Parents on certain state benefits are entitled to funding towards the cost of the designated school activity/journey. These benefits are:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

A voluntary contribution of 60p per student per day will be requested for administration charges.

Pupil Premium

The school receives funding from the Education Funding Agency for each student eligible for Pupil Premium at the following rates:

- £1,320 for pupils in reception year to year 6
- £935 for pupil in year 7 to 11
- £1,900 for pupils identified for Pupil Premium Plus

This includes those eligible for free school meals (or who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years) and students who have been 'looked after children'. Pupil Premium funding may be used to subsidise charges for those students described above.

The Executive Headteacher should tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

Financial Hardship

In the case of financial hardship other than 'Pupil Premium', parents/carers will be informed of local charities, so that they may apply for support. Parents may apply to the school for financial assistance.

2. Day Trips/Activities in School Time

School hours are those when the school is actually in session and does not include the break in the middle of the school day.

The law does not allow schools to charge for these activities. Parents may be asked to make voluntary contributions. There is no obligation for parents to pay this, and no students will be left out if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. The school may, however, have to cancel the activity if it does not have sufficient funds to cover the cost. If a charge is made for each student, this should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.

A voluntary contribution of 60p per student per day will be requested for administration charge.

3. Education outside School Hours

Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or that form part of the schools basic curriculum for religious education. In addition, no charge can be made for activities that are essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination.

A charge of 60p per student per day will be made for administration charges.

4. Education partly during School Hours

Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge is made. Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours e.g. a long distance trip might involve a lot of travel before and after normal school hours, but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours, the trip would count as happening in school time and be free of charge. However, if a trip involved leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but then went on quite late in the evening, this would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed.

5. Public Examinations

If the school enters a student for a public examination, the school will bear the cost of the entry and of providing essential textbooks and material for the course. It is the policy of the school that a student will normally be entered for an examination unless in the professional judgement of the school s/he has not met the minimum requirements of the relevant course or of school attendance by the entry deadline, and in the judgement of the school is predicted to fail. The school may request repayment of examination fees where a student

has not attended a public examination without good reason or where parents request withdrawal after accepting the entry. An examination entry fee may be charged to parents or students if:

- i) The examination is on the set list, but the student was not prepared for it at school
- ii) The examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the student to take it
- iii) The student is being entered to re-sit an examination at either GCSE or AS/A2 where no specific timetabled teaching time is being offered by the school. The student will be liable for the whole entry fee for each exam entered. This is payable in advance and no entries will be made unless paid for.
- iv) When the student fails to attend an exam for which they have been entered and their absence is not covered by a letter from a doctor, the student will be liable for the whole entry fee for each exam missed where a result cannot be calculated due to their absence.
- v) If a student leaves St Mark's CE School and then wishes to enter an exam it will be as a private candidate. The student will be liable for the whole exam entry fee.
- vi) When the exam board notifies the Executive Headteacher that a student has deliberately defaced an examination script by using offensive, inappropriate language or images, parents will be charged for the exam fee.
- vii) All students requesting a remark or return of the script will be charged the appropriate exam board fee. The only exception to this arrangement will be when the school decides, for whatever reason, to ask the Board to remark either the whole centre or a selection of candidates.
- viii) If an outside candidate's entry results in an invigilator being paid solely for that candidate then the cost will be added to the examination fee.

St Mark's CE School reserves the right to withhold exam certification until payments are made.

6. Music Tuition

Charges are made for:

- Instrumental and vocal tuition, which takes place during the school day, subject to the parent/guardian requesting the tuition. (Instrumental and vocal tuition in school is not essential for GCSE – therefore no subsidy given.)

Charges are not made for:

- Students in care. Tuition fees and incidental expenses, such as music, strings, reeds etc are to be covered by the school

Parents/guardians must pay for music and accessories such as strings, rosin and reeds. Payments must be made directly to Southampton Music Services. Failure to pay the fees may result in the termination of lessons. Music Services will issue agreements to all students that include cancellation terms and hire charges for instruments. For instrumental music exams, parents are required to pay, again this is organised through Music Services.

Where a student is eligible for remission of music fees, parents must contact the Educational Benefits Team, 0300 123 4048, in the first instance. The school may choose to subsidise students who are on 'Pupil Premium' if deemed to have an impact upon achievement. No charge will be made for rehearsal groups and ensembles, but students will be expected to attend regularly and take part in public performances.

7. Damage to/loss of Equipment/Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Director of Operations may decide.

8. Ingredients/Materials for Practical Subjects and textbooks

Where a pupil or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a contribution is requested for the cost of the materials used. In the case of Food Technology, pupils usually provide their own ingredients, but if the pupil forgets, the school provides the ingredients and levies a charge. Textbooks are provided free of charge, but in some subjects, additional revision guides are available, for which a charge is made. If a student wishes to annotate a textbook then they must purchase their own copy. Requests for contributions may be tailored based on the needs of individual year groups.

9. Resale of Items to Pupils

We are able to take advantage of certain regulations that enable us to reclaim the VAT on education items which we then sell on to the students at the net cost. These schemes include the Musical Instrument Purchase Scheme.

10. Remissions Policy

The Executive Headteacher, Director of Operations or Governing Body may remit in full or part charges in respect of a pupil, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

The Executive Headteacher, Director of Operations or Governing Body may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

11. Hirers

Governors' policy is stated within the separate community lettings Policy however staff hiring the school facilities will be charged the usual rates.

12. Refunds

Where an activity makes an unexpected surplus the school will consider making a refund. In accordance with the guidance set out within the Financial Handbook for Schools, St Mark's CE School will make a refund where the surplus is either:

- 10% or more of the total cost per person on a residential trip
- £5.00 per person on a day trip

Surpluses will be reimbursed in 'round amounts' only.

Where a refund is offered, the accompanying letter will indicate that 'a surplus of £x has been made and if the parent/guardian would like to take advantage of it they must contact the Finance Office by a date two weeks in advance. If the school is not contacted by that date it will assume that the refund has been donated to the school funds. Refunds donated to the school will be transferred to an appropriate budget heading, following approval from the Director of Operations.

13. After-school clubs

The school has a number of after-school clubs run by members of staff which fall outside of the curriculum. We reserve the right to charge for these after-school clubs as they are classified as childcare rather than education. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, the Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving, on an annual basis, a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support.