
St Margaret's CE Primary School

Charging and Remissions Policy

November 2018

St Margaret's CEP School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Summary

- The Governing body cannot charge parents and pupils for any activity unless it has drawn up a charging policy. Moreover, when made, charges per pupil cannot exceed the actual costs incurred, which mean that pupils who can pay should not be charged extra to cover the costs of those who cannot afford to.
- The governing body must not charge for any activities which take place when the school is actually in session, excluding the break in the middle of the day. The exception is musical instrument tuition for individual pupils or groups of pupils as long as such teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum.
- If the school wishes to run an activity during the school day for which it would need contributions from parents or others, it can invite voluntary contributions. However, no child should be excluded from such activity because his or her parents cannot or will not contribute.
- The school can charge for optional, extra activities provided mainly or wholly outside school hours as long as such activities are not an essential part of the National Curriculum or religious education. 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 the optional extra where charges will be made.
- Chapter 23 of A Guide to the Law for School Governors provides further, detailed guidance on residentials, use of mini-buses, public examinations and activities provided during school hours by external bodies

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that, during the school day, all children have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

The school day is defined as: 8.55am – 12.05pm and 1.00pm – 3.15pm

Objectives

- To ensure that activities offered in school time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to meet the cost
- To identify those activities for which charges may be levied
- To determine which charges will be remitted for parents experiencing hardship
- To invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school in support of any activity organised by the school, where appropriate
- To ensure that the responsibilities for the charging policy are clearly and appropriately allocated
- To ensure the regular review of operations of both Charging and Remissions Policies.

Relationship to other school policies

The policy complements the schools' equal opportunities policy, curriculum policy and teaching and learning policy.

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Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher, other staff, governors

The **Headteacher** will ensure that the following applies:

1. **During the school day**

All activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus religious education will be provided free of charge. It excludes charges made for teaching individual pupils or groups of pupils to play a musical instrument provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs.

In these circumstances no pupil will be prevented from participating because their parents cannot or will not make a contribution. Children of parents who do not make a contribution will not be treated any differently. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents, this will be explained at the planning stage. An activity may be cancelled if not enough voluntary contributions are collected.

2. **Optional activities outside of the school day**

We will charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day, for example, breakfast club, after school clubs and supervised homework sessions. Such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or religious education, nor are they part of an examination syllabus.

3. **Education partly during the school day**

If a non-residential activity happens partly during and partly outside school hours, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day.

4. **Residentials**

Charges will be made for board and lodging, and this charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits as listed below and in the appendix will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

5. **Calculating charges**

When charges are made for an activity (excluding the optional activities), whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through the school budget, voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of the following:

- Income Support (IS);
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- 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 gross income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

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- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- an income related employment and support allowance

The school may also, at the Head Teacher's discretion, agree to waive or remit charges following consideration of a parent's particular circumstances at the time if they are known to be suffering temporary hardship or economic difficulties but do not fall within one of the above categories.

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

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Finance Governor or the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a regular 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.

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Appendix to St Margaret's Collier Street Primary School Charging Policy

(Based on updated DfE Guidance, Charging for School Activities published May 2018)

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to help head teachers and governing bodies set out their policies on charging and remission for school activities and school visits.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. This advice has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in section 7.5 of the Governors Handbook. This advice accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms.

Schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 4 of this guide of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Education

School governing bodies and local authorities **cannot** charge for:

- an admission application to any state funded school- paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Schools and local authorities **can** charge for:
 - any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4).
- Certain early years provisions
- Community facilities

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made by the school

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Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - part of the National Curriculum;
 - part of religious education.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- extended day services offered to pupils, for example breakfast club, after school club, tea and supervised homework sessions.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching staff and adult supervision;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra;
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition where the tuition is an optional extra.

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 pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

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, which are published on the school website.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to

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leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from another source then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

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School policy is that where the school finds it necessary to cancel a school trip due to insufficient voluntary contributions being received, a full refund of payments received will be made. However, a voluntary contribution will not be refunded where a pupil is no longer able to attend,

Residential Visits

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or part of religious education;
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support (IS);
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- 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 gross income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- an income related employment and support allowance

Music Tuition

Although the law states that in general all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to this rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key

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Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Transport

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Charging and Remissions Policies

No charges can be made unless the governing body of the school or local authority has drawn up a charging policy giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for and a remissions policy.

The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). This information should be made available to parents.

The remissions policy must set out any circumstances in which the school or local authority propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging policy. For example, a school may decide to provide an after school cookery class as an optional extra. The governing body may decide to reduce the cost for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits

Optional Extras currently listed at St Margaret's Collier Street Primary School:

- Breakfast Club
- After School Clubs
- Music tuition - flute, piano, recorder
- Board and lodging for residential trips