

Charging & Remission Policy

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Charging & Remission Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, with the exception of some individual or small-group music tuition.
- 1.2 This policy takes guidance from the DFE Policy - 'Charging for School Activities - October 2014' and Local Authority guidance on school lettings. 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 guidance complements the information given in "A Guide to the Law for School Governors" (Chapter 23) and reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996.
- 1.3 The Governors are committed to ensuring our children receive the best education they can and as such will review levels of attendance for any residential. We have taken the National Standard of 95% as minimum to attend a residential. The children are of course, expected to be in school as normal if they don't attend the residential.

2. Voluntary contributions

- 2.1 When organising school trips or visits to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.
- 2.2 The 1996 Education Act draws a distinction between the term 'charges' which are considered to be an obligatory cost and 'voluntary contributions' which are self-explanatory.
- 2.3 Subsidies from various sources e.g. School Fund, St Sebastian's PTA /St Cuthbert's PFA, voluntary organisations, will be considered to keep costs to a minimum.
- 2.4 Whenever possible, the school will give sufficient notice to allow parent/carers to pay by instalments.

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2.5 Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support visits. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school will provide this information on request.

2.6 The following is a list of additional activities, organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to or by a theatre company;
- school trips;
- musical events.
- transport

3. Residential visits

3.1 If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we do not make any charge for the education or travel expenses. However, we do make a charge to cover the costs of board and lodging. Parents of children who receive free school meals are offered the option to make a reduced payment. We do ask for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of the trip. If we do not receive sufficient contributions the residential visit may be cancelled.

4. Music tuition

4.1 All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.

4.2 There is a charge for individual or small-group music tuition, since this is an additional curriculum activity, and not part of the National Curriculum. These individual or small-group lessons are taught by peripatetic music teachers. We make a charge for these lessons. We give parents information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year.

5. Swimming

5.1 The school organises swimming lessons for all children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We therefore make no charge for this activity. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part.

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The National Target is that before leaving primary school every child can swim a minimum of 25 metres. This is a "life skill" so ALL must take part from beginners to proficient swimmers.

6. Extracurricular activities

- 6.1 The school offers a wide range of lunchtime and after school activities such as sports, art nutrition and Young enterprise clubs. These are generally free to attend but parents may be asked for small contributions towards the cost of materials used in these clubs.

7. Archdiocese Levy

- 7.1 A charge of £10 per family is levied on the school by Liverpool Archdiocese for the Schools Building Fund. As a school we have benefitted greatly from this fund in recent years. The levy is a voluntary contribution for parents but any shortfall must be met from the school budget as failure to pay the full amount to the Archdiocese will mean that future requests for funds for necessary building works will be jeopardised.

8. Extended Schools

- 8.1 Charges will be made for services beyond the free entitlement these are Breakfast Club, After School Club, Field of Dreams Nursery and Holiday Splash Scheme. These are termed as optional extras. The consent of parents/guardians and a willingness to meet extra charges will be sought before bookings are finalised. Costs are available in the "parental contracts." It is a requirement that these facilities are self-financing. Costs are reviewed regularly and may be subject to change to reflect changes in staffing and resource costs. Parents will be given at least a months' notice regarding cost changes. If fees remain unpaid for 2 weeks these facilities are withdrawn. Parent/guardians will have to find alternative provision. The Governors may pursue the debt through our solicitors and all legal fees are added to the debtor. If parents wish to discontinue with a provision they need to give 24 hours' notice in terms of Breakfast Club, After School and Holiday Splash. However, the Field of Dreams Nursery require 2 weeks' notice. The fees for Field of Dreams are still payable if the child is sick or absent for any other reason. If a debt remains for Extended School provision this may impact on school activities.

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9. School Meals

- 9.1 The cost of a school meal is determined by the Governing Body. School meals should be paid for on a Monday for that week. Monthly or half termly payment in advance are also acceptable. Any parent that falls into arrears for two weeks will be asked to provide their child with a packed lunch until the debt has been cleared.

10. Breakages and Fines

- 10.1 A charge may (and usually will) be made for any deliberate damage to the school premises, or any school books, materials or equipment. The charge will be for the current cost of replacement or repair. A charge will also be made for the loss by a pupil of any equipment lent to them by school i.e. books, computer equipment etc.

11. Hire of Premises

- 11.1 Please refer to the school's Letting Policy

12. Remission Statement

- 12.1 The school will apply the statutory minimum remissions to any charges that they make. However, no pupil shall be placed at an educational disadvantage because of a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute. In the case of particular need, remission outside these parameters will be at the absolute discretion of the Head teacher, *in consultation with the Chair of Governors*.

13. Calculating charges

- 13.1 When charges are made for any activity, 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 or won't. Support for cases of hardship will be sourced from other relevant areas e.g. school fund, PTA, SVP etc.

Parents who would qualify for support are those who are currently or have ever been in receipt of Free School Meals.

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

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14. Eligible benefits

14.1 Parents who are in receipt of Free School Meals or qualify for Pupil Premium may be entitled to support for some of the charges. You could qualify for Free School Meals if you meet the following criteria:

- Income Support (IS);
- 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 income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed the limit set by HMR&C
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- any similar income related employment and support allowances introduced by the Government.

15. Unpaid charges

15.1 Those unpaid charges which are legally recoverable will be recouped together with resultant costs as a civil debt.

16. Information on charging and remissions policy

16.1 Parents/carers are entitled to information about a school's charging and remissions policy, and governing bodies must ensure that this is available on request during school hours. This will also be available to download from the school website.

16.2 If a parent/guardian is not up to date with payments e.g. music this will impact on opportunities which also require payments e.g. residential. Current obligations must be cleared before new commitments are accepted.

17. Policy Review

17.1 This policy was drawn up in line with DFE guidance and agreed by the Finance Committee of the Governing Body. It will be reviewed as part of the Governor Policy review cycle, by the Finance Committee.

18. Other Issues

Extended Schools and Breakfast Club Charges
Field of Dreams Charges

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Invoicing and Payment Procedures
Non Attendance or Cancellation
Lettings Policy Review

Policy Written: May 2020

Approved by Governors: November 2020

Committee Responsible: Finance & Premises

Next Review: May 2021

Staff Responsible: Lorraine Fay

Statutory Review as per DfE: Governors have determined this to be annually