

## **St Cuthbert Mayne School**

Growing together in love and learning as followers of Jesus

### **Charging and Remissions Policy**

#### **Purpose**

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular), regardless of their parents' financial means. Education provided during the school day, which includes all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum together with religious education, is free of charge under the provision of the Education Reform Act 1988.

The Governing Body recognises that it is important to offer every child access to a wide range of additional activities including music tuition, clubs, trips and residential experiences available through the school. These activities make a valuable contribution to a pupil's personal and social development. Whilst we aim to make the minimum number of requests for money from parents/carers, the Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in certain circumstances.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items or activities which the school will provide free of charge and those for which there may be a charge.

#### **Sources/Consultation**

The policy has been informed by the DfE guidance *Charging for School Activities* (May 2018) 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.

#### **Relationship to other school policies**

The policy complements the school's Mission Statement and policies relating to equality, curriculum, and teaching and learning.

### **CHARGING POLICY**

#### **School Dinners / Milk**

- Charges will be made for school dinners and for milk. The charge for a school meal is the standard Junior meal price plus 10p admin charge. The charge for milk will not exceed the actual cost. Those approved for free school meals will not be charged for meals or for milk.

#### **Educational visits**

- Each visit is carefully planned to support the delivery of the National Curriculum, but school trips are not a statutory requirement and therefore the school receives no delegated funding specifically to pay for this provision. With the exception of residential visits (see below), it is the school's policy that voluntary contributions will be sought from parents, to cover the cost of the activity and transport.
- For each trip a letter will be sent home detailing the educational purpose of the trip and the estimated cost per pupil, and parents will be invited to give

permission indicating willingness or otherwise to make a voluntary contribution of any amount up to the full cost.

- Parents will be notified that if sufficient funds cannot be raised the trip may have to be cancelled.
- No child will be excluded from an Educational visit on the grounds that their parents have not contributed.

### **Residential Trips**

- A charge will be made for any residential visits or overseas trips. Although the trip may take place during school hours, participation is optional and education will continue to be provided for any children remaining in school during the period of the trip.

### **Visitors/Special Events in School**

- From time to time the school may invite a non-school based organisation (such as a visiting theatre group) to arrange an activity on school premises during the school day. Where the activity does not form a necessary part of the National Curriculum, school will ask for a voluntary contribution however no child will be excluded on grounds of cost.

### **Materials and Equipment**

- The school will normally provide free of charge any materials, equipment and transport required in order to deliver the National Curriculum. However, voluntary contributions, in the form of money or materials such as ingredients, may occasionally be sought from parents for activities where the end product is to be taken home (e.g. craftwork, design technology, food technology).
- Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them (e.g. pens, stationery, workbooks, models)

### **Responsibility for School Property and Library Books**

- The school may, at the discretion of the Headteacher, seek to recover from parents the costs of repairing or replacing any item of school property which has been wilfully damaged or lost.
- Children may take reading books home, or borrow books to take home from the school library, but before they can parents must agree to either replace or pay for any books lost or damaged.

### **Extra-Curricular (Out of School Hours) Activities**

- Every effort will be made to provide extra-curricular activities free of charge whenever possible. However, the school is not permitted to subsidise extra-curricular activities from delegated government funding, and so must make a charge for some optional activities where costs are incurred.
- This policy draws a distinction between two types of extra-curricular provision: activities run by the school, and those run by external providers who use the school premises.
- **School Run Activities.** In the case of school-run activities, any charge will be kept to a minimum and will be made only to cover costs where these are

incurred. To minimise administration time and costs, payment of charges will usually be requested in advance as a termly or half-termly amount depending on the number of weeks for which a pupil signs up to participate, but in cases of hardship parents may make a request to spread the cost by paying weekly. Either way, payment must be received in advance of the session(s) and is non-refundable except in exceptional circumstances (see refund policy).

- **Clubs Run by External Providers.** In the case of clubs run by external providers, these providers are independent of the school's charging policy and are permitted to set their own rates which they charge directly to parents, however the school will always seek to negotiate the best value arrangement on behalf of pupils.
- Furthermore, it is the school's policy that any income from letting the school's premises to these providers may be used to subsidise provision of school-led activities and to support the school's remissions policy.

### **Instrumental Music Lessons**

- Hertfordshire Music Service carry out all the administration with regard to music lessons which includes invoicing parents directly for music lessons that take place during school hours. Parents agree to abide by the Music Service's Terms and Conditions.
- The number of children sharing a lesson may vary, and will be determined by the instrumental teacher, according to what best meets the educational needs of the children in that group; the decision will not be based on financial considerations.
- Fees are charged as a termly lump sum to be billed in advance at the beginning of each term, and payment must be received before lessons can be taken.
- Parents/carers are responsible for providing the instrument and any tuition books and accessories needed, and also for meeting the cost of any examination fees (exams are however optional).
- The school has a small number of musical instruments available for loan to children who cannot afford to buy their own, subject to availability.

### **REMISSIONS POLICY**

- The school will always endeavour to provide activities free of charge whenever possible, and to set charges to minimum levels so as not to preclude children from accessing provision.

#### **Families qualifying for remission or help with charges**

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Governing Body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived. If remission or help is available in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table below. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below. Families eligible for remission/ help with charges include:

- Families in receipt of Free School Meals
- Families in receipt of Free School Meals within the past six years

- Looked After Children
- Previously Looked After Children

*Qualifying criteria to apply for 'Free School Meals' includes families on:*

- 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 - 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)

<b>Activity or thing which will or may be charged for</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Remitted or help available</b>
Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them	For example, pens, workbooks, models.	Remission for eligible pupils, listed above
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils	Application can be made to the Music Service for free tuition for disadvantaged pupils.
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Remission for eligible pupils, listed above
Charges will be made for after-school activities run by external providers	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Remission for eligible pupils, listed above
Charges will be made for school dinners and for milk.	The charge for a school meal includes a 10p admin charge.  The charge for school milk will not exceed the actual cost.	Those approved for free school meals will not be charged for meals or for milk.
Charges for Breakfast Club	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Remission for eligible pupils, listed above

This list is not definitive and applications for financial support will be considered in other cases of financial hardship. The decision in each case shall be taken by the headteacher after consulting the Chair of Governors or the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Finance and Pay Committee. All such decisions shall be reported (anonymously) to the next meeting of the Finance and Pay Committee.

The school will occasionally request Parents' Association funding to subsidise the cost of a trip/activity for an entire group/class of children or for individual children where the headteacher recognises a need. This subsidy is subsequently reported to parents at the PA AGM.

Children are not excluded by the school from curriculum activities for financial reasons.

## **REFUND POLICY**

- Parents may ask for a refund of voluntary contributions if their child misses a school trip due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. However, in cases where the school has already incurred a direct and non-recoverable cost in including the child on the trip (for example, purchase of a ticket which cannot be returned) then any such refund will be discretionary.
- This refund policy does not apply to charges made for out-of-hours or optional activities, which are non-refundable except in the event of cancellation by the school. Where a child drops out of a school-led club or extra-curricular activity which has been paid for in advance, a discretionary refund may be considered for the unattended sessions only in exceptional circumstances and/or if the cost may be recovered by offering the place to another child.

## **FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES**

- The school may hold events such as sponsor days during the year as a means of raising extra funds to support areas of provision not covered by the delegated budget, such as school trips and school-led extra-curricular activities.
- Funds raised in this way may also be used to support the school's remissions policy.
- All children will participate in these activities which take place during school hours, but sponsorship is of course voluntary.
- The Parents Association may also organise events throughout the year which parents are invited voluntarily to support.

## **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 we shall publish a list of visits at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments, eg School Journey.
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

### **Arrangements for dealing with surplus**

Where an activity makes an unexpected surplus, the school will consider making a refund, in accordance with the guidance set out in the HCC Financial Handbook. A refund will be made where the surplus is either:

- 5% or more of the total cost per person, or
- £3 or more per person, whichever is higher.

Surpluses will be reimbursed in 'round amounts' only, eg £3 not £3.29.

Where a refund is offered, the accompanying letter will indicate that 'a surplus of £x has been made and that if the parent/guardian would like to take advantage of it they should contact the office by a date x weeks in advance. If the school is not contacted by that date it will assume that the refund has been donated to school funds.' All refunds will be made by BACS payment or in cheque format in order to maintain a clear audit trail. Refunds donated to the school will be transferred to an appropriate budget heading, following approval from the headteacher.

### **Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

The Finance Committee of the Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by reviewing the monthly budget reports on 'Visits' and receiving reports on any budgetary variations. It will also be reviewed and monitored in line with the Pupil Premium Report.

**This policy was approved in March 2022**

**It will be subject to review in March 2025**