



Charging and Remissions Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on

Signed by Chair of Governors.....

Reviewed: February 2019

Next Review Date: February 2021

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Introduction

As a school, we believe that pupils gain immeasurably from visits and trips including residential opportunities. For a fuller outline of the perceived benefits of educational visits, please refer to the School's Educational Visits Policy.

This document intends to provide information specifically to parents and carers about the school's policy in relation to charging for such experiences and the criteria against which the charges will be remitted wholly or partly.

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' or carers' financial means.

The Head of School will ensure that staff are familiar with, and correctly apply the policy. The Governors will review the policy annually.

The key points of the law on charging (Education Act 1996) are as follows:

- School governing bodies and local authorities, subject to limited exceptions, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment.)
- Schools must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

However, in accordance with the law, St John's RC School **can** charge for activities that are known as "Optional Extras".

These optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the national curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
 - or c) part of religious education.

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- 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);
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- extended day services offered to pupils, including our after school club.

As a school, when calculating the cost of optional extras, we would consider:

- Any materials, books, equipment etc. provided in connection with the activity
- The cost of buildings or accommodation.
- Non- teaching staff.
- Specialist teachers e.g. instructors.

We will calculate the cost based on the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided equally by the number of pupils participating, therefore no parents/ carers will be in the position of subsidising other pupils' participation.

Optional extras that may be provided by St John's include residential trips, and after school clubs.

Staff are always encouraged to consider the cost of activities in their planning and to look at cost effective ways of providing these experiences.

Again we would stress that contributions towards a school trip are entirely voluntary and no student would be excluded purely because their parents could not afford to take part. However, if insufficient funds are collected or raised it may be that the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

Participation in Optional Extras

Any participation in any optional extra is purely on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore we will always seek to gain your agreement when planning any optional extra.

Voluntary Contributions

Please note that we are permitted in law to request a voluntary contribution, but there is **no obligation** on your part to make a contribution.

If insufficient funds are gathered, and we cannot raise funds from other sources, then it may not be possible for the activity to go ahead.

Places on trips

Please note that we will not exclude pupils from activities simply because parents are unwilling or unable to pay. In such cases, young people would still have the opportunity to go if it is possible for the trip to go ahead.

We would hope that you would never feel pressured or obliged to pay.

Music Tuition

Music tuition is the exception to the rule and charges may be made for vocal and instrumental tuition. However, at present, we make no charges for extra musical tuition including at lunchtimes.

Activities during the school day

During the school day, all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum or religious education, will be provided free of charge, although voluntary contributions may be requested to cover costs of transportation and the fees of any third party provider. When organising school trips or visits during the school day which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the students, we may invite parents to contribute to the cost of the trip through a voluntary contribution.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of additional activities that may be organised by schools during the school day, for which voluntary contributions will be invited from parents:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre;
- school trips;
- musical events.

Charges may also be made, for example, for the cost of materials for an art or design and technology project if parents wish their young person to own the finished product. Similarly, parents may be asked to supply or pay for cooking ingredients.

Activities partly during the school day:

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge, if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day. Conversely, if the greater proportion of time spent on the activity falls outside of the normal school day, charges will be made.

When such activities are arranged, parents can request information on how charges were calculated.

Remissions

Please note that in certain situations, you may be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodgings if you are in receipt of certain benefits including:

- 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)

In addition, the school recognises that in some cases inclusion in an activity may cause a family particular financial hardship, and the head teacher may exercise discretion in waiving charges.

Where a school wishes to charge for an optional activity, parents will be informed in advance.

We recognise our 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:

- We shall advise parents at the earliest opportunity of visits and their approximate cost;

- We will try to ensure that parents can pay in instalments where it is practical;
- If a trip arises at relatively short notice, we may allow payment of instalments to continue past the date of the trip if this is practical.

Other Charges

Damage/Loss to Property

- Very rarely, charges may 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 Head teacher may decide.
- Similarly, a charge may be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to a school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Head teacher may decide.
- We may also levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report, or copying pupils' records.

We hope that this document helps to clarify the school's position in relation to any charges it may make, and the circumstances in which charges will be remitted. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.