



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School,
Saffron Walden

CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Policy No. STM-061

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1. Introduction

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that educational visits, residential experiences, clubs, practical activities, music tuition, and other enrichment opportunities make to pupils' educational, personal and social development.

The school is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and aims to ensure that no child is disadvantaged or excluded from participation in educational activities because of their family's financial circumstances.

This policy sets out the circumstances in which the school may make a charge for activities and the circumstances in which financial assistance or remission may be available.

This policy is based on the Charging for school activities guidance published by the Department for Education and the provisions of Sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a broad range of educational opportunities.
- Clarify the activities for which the school may and may not charge.
- Explain when voluntary contributions may be requested.
- Set out arrangements for remissions and financial support.
- Ensure fairness, transparency and equality of access for all pupils.

3. Definitions

Charge

A fee payable for a specifically defined activity.

Remission

The cancellation, reduction or waiver of a charge that would otherwise be payable.

Voluntary Contribution

A contribution requested from parents/carers towards the cost of an activity where there is no legal obligation to contribute.

Optional Extra

An activity for which the school is permitted by law to make a charge.

4. Activities for Which the School Will Not Charge

The school will not charge for:

- Education provided during school hours, including the provision of materials, books, instruments or equipment.
- Education provided outside school hours where it forms part of:
 - the National Curriculum;
 - a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is being prepared at the school; or
 - Religious Education.
- Entry for prescribed public examinations where the pupil has been prepared for the examination by the school.
- Examination re-sits where the pupil is being prepared by the school for the re-sit.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit that is required as part of the National Curriculum or required to fulfil a statutory duty.

- Education provided on residential visits where the visit takes place wholly or mainly during school hours.

The school will not require parents/carers to provide books, equipment or materials needed for statutory education. Occasionally parents may be asked to support with costs on a voluntary basis.

5. Voluntary Contributions

The school may invite parents/carers to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- Educational visits.
- Visitors and workshops.
- Curriculum enrichment activities.
- Transport associated with educational activities.
- Additional learning resources.

There is no obligation on any parent/carer to make a contribution.

No pupil will be excluded from participation in an activity because their parent/carer is unwilling or unable to contribute.

The identity of families who do not make a contribution will remain confidential.

Where an activity relies on voluntary contributions to proceed, this will be made clear in advance. If insufficient contributions are received, the school reserves the right to cancel the activity.

In the event of cancellation by the school, all monies paid will be refunded.

6. Optional Extras for Which Charges May Be Made

Charges may be made for activities classified as optional extras.

These include:

6.1 Education Outside School Hours

Activities provided outside school hours that are not:

- Part of the National Curriculum;
- Part of a prescribed public examination syllabus; or
- Religious Education.

6.2 Examination Fees

The school may charge:

- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared by the school.
- Examination entry fees if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet examination requirements and the school incurs costs as a result.
- Fees for certain re-sits where permitted by regulations.

6.3 Materials

A charge may be made where parents/carers wish to own the finished product made during:

- Design and Technology;
- Art;
- Food and Nutrition;

- Other practical subjects.

Parents may also be asked to provide ingredients for food preparation activities where appropriate.

6.4 Community and Extended Services

Charges may be made for:

- Breakfast clubs;
- After-school clubs;
- Holiday provision;
- Community activities;
- Activities offered to the wider community.

Any charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity.

7. Music Tuition

The school will not charge for class music lessons delivered as part of the National Curriculum. Charges may be made for instrumental or vocal tuition provided either individually or in small groups where:

- The tuition is not required as part of the National Curriculum; and
- The tuition has been requested by a parent/carer.

The charge will not exceed the cost of providing the tuition.

8. Residential Visits

8.1 Charges That Cannot Be Made

The school will not charge for:

- Education provided on residential visits taking place during school hours.
- Education provided outside school hours where the activity forms part of:
 - the National Curriculum;
 - Religious Education; or
 - a prescribed examination syllabus.

8.2 Charges That May Be Made

The school may charge for:

Board and Lodging

Where a residential visit includes board and lodging, the school may make a charge up to the actual cost incurred.

The charge will not exceed the actual cost of provision.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for optional extras associated with the visit where permitted by legislation.

Parents/carers will be informed of all applicable charges before arrangements are finalised.

9. Remissions and Financial Assistance

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring equality of access to educational opportunities. Parents/carers experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the school confidentially to discuss support that may be available.

The school may provide discretionary assistance for educational visits, activities or residential experiences where funding permits.

Board and Lodging Remission

Parents/carers may be entitled to remission of board and lodging charges for residential visits if they receive one of the qualifying benefits specified in current government regulations, including:

- Universal Credit (subject to prescribed earnings thresholds);
- 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 (subject to qualifying conditions).

Evidence of entitlement may be requested.

The school will treat all such information in strict confidence.

10. Breakages, Damage and Loss

The Governing Body reserves the right to seek reimbursement from parents/carers for:

- Deliberate or reckless damage to school property;
- Loss or damage to school equipment caused by a pupil's behaviour;
- Damage to books, ICT equipment or other resources beyond normal wear and tear.

The amount charged will reflect the actual cost of repair or replacement.

11. School Meals

No charge will be made for pupils entitled to:

- Free School Meals;
- Universal Infant Free School Meals (where applicable).

Pupils not entitled to free meals will be charged the published school meal price approved by the Governing Body.

12. Admissions

No charge will be made in relation to admission to the school.

13. Equality of Access

The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that financial circumstances do not create unnecessary barriers to participation.

When planning educational visits and enrichment activities, consideration will be given to supporting pupils who may otherwise be unable to participate for financial reasons.

Any requests for assistance will be considered sensitively and confidentially.

14. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body is responsible for approving and monitoring this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy and reporting any significant issues relating to charging or remissions.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to changes in legislation, government guidance or local circumstances.

Appendix

Suggested wording for visit letters

The school is requesting a voluntary contribution towards the cost of this activity. There is no obligation to contribute and no pupil will be excluded from participation if their parent/carer is unable or unwilling to contribute. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received, the school may be unable to proceed with the activity. Any request for financial assistance will be treated in confidence.