

POLICY ON: CHARGING AND REMISSION

Persons responsible for this policy and to whom observations and comments should be made:

Mr JP Welsh	Headteacher
Mrs L D'Arcy	Business Manager
Mrs P Melia	Chair of Governors

Copies of this policy are available on request to: Governors, Staff and Parents.

Please also see Lettings of School Facilities Policy.

Reviewed and updated: May 2016

Next review: May 2018

Recommended by FC on:

Approved by full Governing Body on:

Introduction

The policy of the governors of Holy Family Catholic Primary School is to provide free education for all attending pupils. This policy is implemented within the letter of the law, and also embracing the spirit of it. The governing body has, therefore, set up a charging and remissions policy for certain activities in school. It will be reviewed from time to time and will be no less generous than the LA's policy.

Outline

Where visits are arranged either as an integral part of the curriculum or to enhance pupils' learning experience, parents may be asked to contribute towards the cost. However, legislation states that a pupil should not be debarred from a visit if a parent does not wish to contribute. In cases of family hardship, parents may apply, in confidence, to the head teacher for exemption from such contributions. However, we hope that parents will realise that there comes a point when a trip is not viable if sufficient contributions are not forthcoming.

There may be occasions when an organisation other than the LA or the school governing body arranges an activity during school hours, and parents want their children to take part. Such organisations may charge parents for the services provided, but permission for children's absence must be sought from the school.

We believe that a school should give pupils as many varied learning experiences as possible and we shall do our utmost to ensure that all our pupils have the opportunity to benefit from such experiences. For other activities such as field trips, concert and theatre visits the Table below indicates the charges that will be made.

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying charges.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Any support under part 6 of the Immigrations and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that working Tax Credit is not also received, or the family's income as assessed by HM Customs and Revenue does not exceed £16,190 in the financial year 2013/2014
- The guarantee of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on October 27th 2008

Activity	Comment
Activities outside school time not related to statutory duties.	Charges will be levied.
Board and lodging on residential visits.	Parents are to be charged. Except in cases of statutory remission where families receive benefits.
Educational visits and field trips.	Parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution. Which must not excessively exceed the cost of the visit
Hardship	No pupil will be left out of any activity because Parents/Carers cannot or will not make a contribution. The school provides a small hardship fund which is able to assist to a degree parents in such circumstances

BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE TO THE CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY

Introduction

The education provided by any maintained school must be free and this includes materials, equipment and any transport that is needed to take pupils from the school to the activity such as to the local swimming pool for swimming lessons. Under the charging provisions of the Education Act 1996, governing bodies of maintained schools may choose to charge for certain defined activities, but can only do this if they have first drawn up a statement of their charging and remissions policy.

If they choose to charge parents for the board and lodging costs of a residential visit, and if the education provided on that visit must otherwise be provided free under the terms of the Education Act 1996, they must, as a minimum, remit the board and lodging cost for pupils whose parents are in receipt of income support, family credit, or disability working allowance. Otherwise, remission, like charging, is at the discretion of the Governors. However, it is likely that any reduction in remission beyond that which the LA would pay would be seen as unfair.

Charging Policies

The governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy on charging. The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than that of the LA, 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). Parents have a right to ask for this information, and a summary must be included in the prospectus published by the school.

If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund-raising, and not by charging the paying pupils more.

The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity, but only if those teachers have been given a separate contract to provide the optional extra. A contract need not be a formal document. It could be a simple letter to a teacher asking him or her to provide a service on a particular occasion.

When drawing up their statements, governing bodies should remember that charging is only permissible for the following areas of activity:

- board and lodging on residential visits;
- costs associated with individual tuition, and tuition in groups, in the playing of musical instruments, including vocal tuition, out of school hours (unless it is provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum);
- activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and which are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education;
- the cost of entering a pupil for a public examination, not prescribed in regulations, and for preparing the pupil for such an examination outside school hours;
- re-sits of prescribed public examinations when no further preparation has been provided by the school;
- optional extras.

Schools Hours

Parents must be informed of the days, and the hours of those days, that the school their children are attending is in session.

School "hours" mean when the school is in session and does not include breaks or INSET days. A school should provide a minimum of two sessions per day, each of two hours, giving a minimum of twenty hours per week. However, as a general guide to good practice, the Secretary of State has adopted the Office of Standards in Education's (OfSTED) advice on the following minimum hours per week:

- 21 hours for pupils aged 5 to 7
- 23 ½ hours for pupils aged 7 to 10
- 24 hours for pupils aged 11 to 13
- 25 hours for pupils aged 14 to 16

Middle Schools which are considered to be primary schools should aim to provide at least 23 ½ ; hours per week, while middle schools which are considered to be secondary schools should aim to provide a minimum of 24 hours per week. These hours do not include collective worship, registration or break times. As far as the number of days is concerned, a school must provide 190 days of two sessions or 380 half days of a single session - each session being a minimum of two hours as already stated.

Other Activities During School Hours

In addition to music tuition, non-school organisations may be asked by a school to arrange an activity to take place during school hours and such organisations may

charge parents where parents want their children to join the particular activity, such as an outside theatre group. While schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they can still ask parents to make voluntary contributions to help school funds go further where this is the source of funding. While it is legitimate for the school to say a particular activity cannot take place if sufficient voluntary funding is not forthcoming, no pupil may be left out of such an activity because her or his parents cannot or will not make a contribution.

Also a non-school organisation may arrange an activity to take place during school hours and parents want their children to join the activity. Such organisations may charge parents. But parents must then ask the school to agree to their children being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take their children out of school for a family holiday. The head teacher and governing body must decide whether this is in the pupils' best interest. They must also bear in mind the requirements of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations that a pupil should not be allowed more than two weeks' absence in any year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Within or Outside School Hours

For an activity to be considered wholly or mainly outside school hours, the bulk of the time spent on the activity must lie outside normal school hours. For example, if a group of pupils was going to a musical concert and had to leave mid-morning and arrive back an hour after school normally finished, such a visit would count as within school hours. On the other hand, if pupils had to leave mid-afternoon and arrived back in the late evening, such a visit would count as taking place outside school-time and charges could then be made.

Governing bodies should take care that where a charge is made it only covers the actual cost and the cost of teachers supervising the activity. If funds are needed to help with hardship cases, these must be through voluntary contributions or from any hardship fund set up by the school and/or the Parents' Association not by an added charge to other parents. Where the cost covers supervisory teachers, such teachers should have a contract that indicates this work is an optional extra.

Residential Activities

For a residential trip taking place largely during school-time, or that is essential to the curriculum provided by the school, no charge can be made for the education element or the cost of travel. Charges can be made for board and lodging, but it must be remembered that in all cases this can only be done for parents who are not receiving income support, family credit, or disability working allowance.

Voluntary Contributions

Although schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind) to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. Schools should also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently. If a particular activity for pupils cannot take place without some financial help from parents, that should be explained to parents at the planning stage. The essential

point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. The school must first decide which class or group of pupils is to benefit from the activity and then look for voluntary contributions, either for that activity or by general fund-raising.