

**St Michael's CE Primary School
Sydenham**



Charging and Remission Policy

Agreed by the Governing Body on: Spring 2024

Signed (Chair):

Review Date: Spring 2027

Charging and Remission Policy

Introduction

At St. Michael's we want every child to live an abundant life within a safe, secure and happy school environment where Christian principles are upheld and a Christian ethos prevails.

We are guided by the following regulations:

- Maintained schools must provide free education for their registered students, provided it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours.
- School hours are those when a school is actually in session, not including mid-day break.
- The main exception is that a charge may be made for individual musical tuition, except where it is within the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Under certain circumstances a third party may charge parents direct for activities organised in school hours.
- Charging is permitted for education provided out of school hours, unless it is within the requirements of the National Curriculum or to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education when only charges for board, lodging or residential trips can be made.
- Governors can choose to remit charges in whole or part.
- Charges must be remitted for board and lodgings to students whose parents have confirmed eligibility for their child to receive benefits-based Free School Meals (whether or not a Free School Meal is actually taken), if the activity takes place during the school hours or is covered by the criteria relating to National Curriculum or religious provision.
- Voluntary contributions may be requested for any activity provided it is clear that there is no obligation to contribute and that there will be no differentiations between those who contribute and those who do not.

1. Charging for Musical Instrument Tuition

The school will obtain parental agreement before students are given tuition.

Charges may not be levied whether or not the tuition takes place within the school time if the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory duties relating to religious education

2. Charging for Board and Lodging

Cost for board and lodging may be charged for whether or not the visit takes place within the school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory duties relating to religious education

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost to the pupil – i.e. they must not include an element representing part of the cost of staff accompanying the visit. They could be covered by voluntary contributions.

In accordance with statutory provisions the Governors will remit any charges for board and lodging for students whose parents are in receipt of income support or family credit (i.e. where the child is eligible for Free School Meals whether or not a Free School Meal is taken) where the activity takes place in school hours, or if it is out of hours except if the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:

- The National Curriculum
- Statutory duties relating to religious education

Governors will also consider whether to remit charges in other circumstances.

3. Charging for Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - ❖ Part of the National Curriculum;
 - ❖ Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - ❖ Part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- Transport that is not 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; and
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- Non-teaching staff;

- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The cost or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit. The school will obtain parental agreement before providing an optional extra where charges will be made.

4. Charging for Cost of Ingredients, Materials etc.

The school will bear the costs of ingredients, materials and equipment required for practical subjects.

The school may make a charge for these items if the parents agree, in advance, that they wish to own the finished product.

The school may request parents to make a voluntary contribution towards these costs.

All students will be treated the same, whether their parents contribute or not.

5. Charging for Transport During School Hours

If the school or the Local Authority provide transport for students during school hours (i.e. transporting students on a split school site or to an activity provided or arranged by the school or Local Authority), no charge can be made to parents. However the school may request a voluntary contribution.

If a student uses transport not provided by the school or Local Authority to travel from home to an activity sanctioned by the school but not provided by them, the parents may be required to cover the cost (i.e. travel to work experience).

7. Charging for Damaged or Lost Items

The school may charge parents for the cost to replace items broken, damaged or lost if it is due to student behaviour. Enforcement action (e.g. taking a parent to court) for failure to pay such charges is not permitted.

8. Voluntary Contributions

The school may request voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. If, however, the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school must make this clear to parents at the outset. The school must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

No child may be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit or activity then it must be cancelled. The school should ensure that this is made

clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The school should make it clear to parents at the outset its policy for allocating places on school visits.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, the school will ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. The school will not send colour-coded letters or the like to parents as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. The school will not send direct debit or standing order mandates to parents when requesting contributions.

All correspondence to parents in which a (voluntary) contribution is requested towards the cost of a trip/activity must include a suitable paragraph informing parents that assistance can be provided towards meeting the cost of the contribution by confidential discussion with the headteacher.

9. Remission of charges

The school may remit all or part of charges for certain activities and services for children whose names are on the list of children eligible for Free School Meals (whether or not a free school meals is actually taken) or, in some cases, for children who have at some stage been eligible for Free School Meals (i.e. 'ever 6' children for whom the school receives Pupil Premium Grant) at the point at which charges become due.

The current activities and services for which the school remits charges are as follows (but not limited to):

- Small group music tuition (e.g. guitar lessons) – all charges
- Attendance at pre-school Breakfast Club – proportion of charge (1/3rd remitted)
- Costs of board and lodging on residential school trips (e.g. Year 6 School Journey) – all relevant costs
- After school activity clubs – 50% remitted.

10. Summary – School Remission and Charging Policy

The school encourages a varied and full range of activities for all students to participate in, and this policy aims to enable equal access to these experiences for all our students.

In conformity with the Education Reform Act 1988, it is our policy:

1. Except where students are entitled to statutory remission, to charge for all board and lodging costs on residential activities.
2. To charge for activities wholly or mainly outside of school hours which are not required to fulfil the National Curriculum or religious education.
3. Not to charge for books, materials, equipment, instruments or incidental transport provided in connection with National Curriculum, statutory religious education except where parents have indicated in advance their willingness to purchase the products.
4. To request voluntary contributions from parents for activities in or out of school hours for which compulsory charges cannot be made, but which can only be provided if there is enough voluntary funding to ensure that no student is excluded from such activity by reason of unwillingness or inability to pay the voluntary contribution.

5. To request payment from parents for damage or loss of school property caused wilfully or neglectfully by their children.
6. To delegate to the Headteacher the determination of any individual case arising from the implementation of this policy.