

St. Peter's Catholic School

CHARGES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

1. Introduction

The Education Reform Act (1988) and the Education Act (1996) required the L.E.A. and Governing Bodies to establish and keep under review policies in respect of charges and remission arrangements for school activities and trips. The Governors adopted the guidelines published by the Department for Education in November 2013 at the Governors Meeting in July 2014. There follows a summary of the main provisions of the Education Act 1996 (Sections 449 – 462) referred to in this policy as “The Act” with respect to charging. For fuller details, reference can be made to the guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

2. The Objectives of the Charging Provisions

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents. The Governing Body of the School are responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Headteacher for its implementation. Any determinations with respect to individual parents will be considered jointly by the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

3. Prohibition of Charges

The Governing Body of St. Peter's Catholic School recognises that legislation prohibits charges for :

- An admission application to the School – paragraph 1.9(n) of the ‘Schools Admission Code 2012’ rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment.
- Education provided outside school hours if is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the School, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the School and examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the School.
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the School premises, where the Local Authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Governing Body or Local Authority has arranged for the pupils to be educated.
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the School; and
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

4. School Charging

Under Section 454 of The Act neither pupils nor parents may be required to pay for or to supply any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education during school hours.

Schools and Local Authorities can charge for :-

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the pupil's parent wishes him/her to own them.
- Optional extras (see Section 6)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (See Section 9)
- Certain early years provision, as governed by 'The Education (Charges for Early Years Provision) Regulations 2012.
- Community Facilities, as governed under s.27 of the Education Act 2002.

5. Voluntary Contributions

The School has the discretion to ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the School or for any school activity. However, all charges must be voluntary and this will be made clear to parents from the outset. It will also be made clear that if the activity cannot be funded without sufficient voluntary contributions then the activity may not take place. No pupil will be excluded from participation in any school activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

6. Optional Extras

The School is permitted to charge for some activities that are known as "optional extras", these include :

- 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 fees(s) if the registered pupil has not 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 Governing Body/Local Authority 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 the School can include, where applicable, amounts in relation to :

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment or incidentals, including but not limited to photocopying, postage costs, bank transaction charges or telephone call charges, provided in connection with the optional extra;
- The Cost of the buildings and accommodation;
- Non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services provided purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The costs, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

The School will as stipulated in the act only charge individual pupils the total cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not include any element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore 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 that do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

For all optional extras provided where the actual costs, after all direct and incidental charges have been met, are less than the actual contributions received the residual balance will be used to contribute to the School's Mini-bus Repair and Replacement Fund.

7. Residential Visits

Charges will be made to parents for all board and lodging costs connected with residential trips, where permitted by the Act. No action will be taken to remit part of any such charges to parents not eligible for compulsory remission, as defined in Section 9.

8. Public Examinations

8.1 Parents will be charged for the full cost, including cost of non-teaching staff time, materials, books, instruments or equipment used, for the :

- Re-scrutinisation of examination papers where this has been requested by parents;
- Examination re-entry costs, when preparation has not been carried out by the School;
- Entries to examinations not on the prescribed list, with the exception of those specifically covered in Section 8.3 below;
- Cost of sitting examinations in locations other than on the School premises.

8.2 Where the School Governors judge that a pupil fails to complete coursework required by the syllabus and/or to sit the examination, except for certified ill health or some other acceptable reason, the School is required to recover, as a civil debt, those public examination fees paid.

8.3 Where the examination is for the first entry to a pupil's home language that is not English irrespective of whether preparation has or has not been carried out by the School then the Governors will not seek to recover any of the costs of that sitting. For any subsequent re-sitting the policy for the recovering of costs will be as detailed in 8.1 above.

9. Music Tuition

Although the law states that in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental tuition and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide that tuition.

The regulations state that charging may not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition programme. No charge may also be made in respect of any pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority (within the meaning of section 22(I) of the Children Act 1989)

10. Remission Policy

The School is required under Section 457 of The Act to have determined the circumstances under which they would remit (in whole or in part) any charge which would otherwise be payable in accordance with the charging policy.

The School is statutorily required to provide for complete remission of any charges in respect of board and lodging provided for a pupil on a residential trip if the education provided on the trip is education in respect of which, by Section 451 of The Act, no charge may be made and the parents are in receipt of :-

- Universal credit (as and when prescribed by Government);
- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, providing that Working Tax Credit is also not received and that the family's income does not exceed the value set annually by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- An income related employment and support allowance introduced 27 October 2008.

Based on the benefit payments at the time of writing and the above may change in light of changes in government policy.

For areas not covered under items of statute the School will consider requests for remission of any charges levied on an individual basis only, applications for such are to be made directly the Headteacher.

11. Breakages and Fines

Parents will be asked to pay for the cost of repairing damage to school property or equipment when this is the result of a pupil's behaviour.

12. Deposits

12.1 The School will retain such amounts required to replace said items not returned up to and including the full amount of the deposit placed. Any deposits not claimed after one full academic year after the end of the student's course of study will be deemed to be donated to the School for disposal at its own decision.

12.2 Deposits held on the student's behalf by the School for cashless catering purposes will only be returned at the end of their course of study where the balance is in excess of the Governors' de-minimis value of £10.