St. Mark's, Elm Tree
Church of England, Voluntary Aided Primary School

Charging and Remissions Policy

The policy was reviewed and amended during the autumn term 2016.

Approved by governors in October 2016.

Chair of Committee: _____

Date: _____

REVIEW DATE – Autumn Term 2017

Mission Statement

At St Mark's Elm Tree CE VA Primary we will:

- Welcome everyone
- Build Christian values and worship into our teaching
- Establish strong links between home, school and community
- Endeavour to reach our full potential and celebrate our achievements
- Care for, encourage and respect each other
- Support each other to stay safe, healthy and make a positive contribution to our World

Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to belong and learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness. We do not tolerate bullying.

INTRODUCTION:

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards students' education. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the students of the school and as additional optional activities. However, due to the limited funds in the delegated budget the Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school. The Governing Body will from time to time, review and amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

CHARGING FOR VISITS

a) All Visits

The group leader should always ensure that parents are notified as early as possible as to:

- The total cost of the visit
- How much of the cost (if any) will come from school
- How much each parent will need to pay or be asked to contribute towards the cost of the visit
- How much spending/pocket money students will reasonably need (especially important for trips which involve a residential element)
- Use of any surplus funds, i.e. will they be returned to parents or retained for future visits?

Early notification of the above is important as this allows parents to make financial preparations. Many parents find it helpful to gauge the value of the visit if they have information relating to the constituent costs of the visit, i.e. transport, accommodation, food, etc.

A system will be established for parents to pay in instalments in the case of residential visits/trips. This may involve the collection of payments beyond the date of the trip in order that no parent may feel at a disadvantage.

We do not discriminate against students from families on lower incomes by offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents/carers.

b) During Normal School Hours:

Although schools cannot charge for school-time activities, it is the schools policy to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip/activity. In reality the value of the requested contributions equates to the total cost of the visit and therefore if insufficient voluntary contributions are forthcoming the visit may have to be cancelled - parents are notified. Pupils whose parents/guardians do not contribute are not discriminated against and students are not left out.

The Governing Body may offer to remit part costs of full board and lodging for any residential activity which:

- Takes place during school hours or;
- Is not an optional extra (see following section for definition).

The decision to offer to remit board and lodging costs, as above, is subject to the parents of a student being in receipt of:

- Income Support;
- Income-Based Jobseekers' Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income doesn't exceed £14,155

Parental permission should be obtained in one of two ways:

i) Sample Parental Declaration. Parents sign a declaration, which contains, e.g. I understand:

- That current legislation permits the School to ask for voluntary contributions towards the costs involved;
- That no student will be discriminated against on the grounds of inability to pay;
- That if sufficient money is not raised by voluntary contributions, then the visit may have to be cancelled.

ii) Signed Slip received back from parents:
A letter about the visit is sent out to parents and contains a reply slip (with space for parental signature) and also a section on meeting the costs of the visit, the essence of which is contained in the following example:

"All pupils will need to take a packed lunch with them. Pupils who receive free School meals will be provided with a packed lunch. As we are travelling by coach, a small cost will be incurred. Current legislation permits us to ask only for voluntary contributions towards the costs involved. No pupil will be discriminated against on the grounds of inability to pay, but if sufficient money is not raised by voluntary contributions, then the visit will have to be cancelled. A contribution of £___ should be sufficient to ensure that the trip can proceed."

c) Outside Of Normal School Hours/Optional Extras

The Head Teacher can charge parents for board and lodging on residential visits, as well as the full cost when a visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'. An optional extra:

- Falls wholly or mainly outside school hours, i.e. a foreign trip during the school holidays is an optional extra.
- Does not form part of the National Curriculum or the statutory requirements for religious education;

- Is not part of a syllabus towards a Prescribed Public Examination

The parents' agreement to meet the costs of an optional extra visit before that visit is planned in detail will always be obtained in writing. The stated cost of an optional extra visit must not include an element of subsidy for pupils whose families do not meet the full charge.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTAL TUITION
The Local Authority, due to the large administrative burden involved in pursuing non-payment, now centrally collects the fees for peripatetic lessons.

INGREDIENTS/MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT (IN KIND)
The Governing Body reserves the right to charge for ingredients, materials or equipment (or the provision of them by parents) or require them to be provided if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the 'finished product'.

BROKEN EQUIPMENT (REPLACEMENT)
The Governors will agree to ask parents to contribute towards the cost of replacement items where these were damaged or broken as a direct result of misconduct on the pupil's part. This does not in any way detract from the teaching staff's duty to brief pupils thoroughly and to manage a calm and safe working environment.

UNIFORM
School uniform is not compulsory. Should parents wish to purchase uniform items other than through the school ordering system they may do so.

REMISSIONS
The Governing Body may remit in full or in part the cost of any activity for particular groups of parents, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part. The Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors will make authorisation for such remission.