

# CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY



## **Introduction**

Education provided during the school day, which includes all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum together with religious education, is free of charge under the provision of the Education Reform Act 1988.

The Trust Board recognises that it is important to provide every child with access to a wide range of additional activities including music tuition, visitors, clubs, trips and residential experiences available through the school. These activities make a valuable contribution to a pupil's personal and social development. Whilst we aim to make the minimum number of requests for money from parents/carers, the Trust Board reserves the right to make a charge in certain circumstances.

Parents may be invited to make voluntary contributions to support any part of the school's work. Where optional activities take place wholly or mainly outside the school day a charge may be made to cover costs. The principles of best value will be applied when planning any activity that incurs a cost to the school and/or charges to parents, and any charge made will not exceed the cost per pupil of providing the activity.

Further details of how our charging policy relates to specific areas of provision are set out below.

Whilst we aim to make the minimum number of requests for money from parents/carers, the Trust Board reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances:

## **Educational Visits**

Each visit is carefully planned to support the delivery of the National Curriculum, but school trips are not a statutory requirement and therefore the school receives no delegated funding specifically to pay for this provision. With the exception of residential visits (see below), it is the school's policy that voluntary contributions will be sought from parents, to cover the cost of the activity and transport.

Some of the extra activities that we try to organise can prove too expensive to be provided from school funds alone, such as residential trips from which our children benefit. Most of the cost of these trips contain two elements:

The cost of food and accommodation - from which some parents/carers receiving certain benefits can claim exemption;

The cost of transport or provision of activities that largely take place in school hours - for which we can only ask for voluntary contribution.

Where the activity does not form a necessary part of the National Curriculum, schools do have the right to make a charge provided that parents are given the option of withdrawing their child from the activity.

For each trip, a letter will be sent home with those children within the age group eligible to take part, containing information on the purpose of the visit. At the end of each letter there will be a slip to return to the indicating willingness or otherwise to make a voluntary contribution.



It is explained in the letter that if sufficient funds cannot be raised the trip/visit may have to be cancelled.

Assuming that the trip/visit does go ahead, no child will be excluded on the grounds that their parents have not contributed.

### **Residential Trips**

A charge will be made for any residential visits or overseas trips which, due to high costs, cannot be subsidised from the school's budget. Although the trip may take place during school hours, participation is optional and education will continue to be provided for any children remaining in school during the period of the trip. The initial letter to parents will explain that pupils who are currently eligible for free school meals may only be expected to pay a non-refundable deposit towards the cost of the residential. (see remissions policy below).

### **Visitors/Special Events in School**

From time to time the school may invite a non-school based organisation (such as a visiting theatre group) to arrange an activity on school premises during the school day. However it is the policy of this school that no child should be excluded on grounds of cost, and so parents are therefore asked only for voluntary contributions.

### **Materials and Equipment**

The school will normally provide free of charge any materials, equipment and transport required in order to deliver the National Curriculum. However, voluntary contributions, in the form of money or materials such as ingredients, may occasionally be sought from parents for activities where the end product is to be taken home (e.g. craftwork, design technology, food technology).

### **Music Tuition**

The school makes a charge to parents for instrumental music lessons provided during and outside of school hours. The cost may vary depending on the instrument being learned. The number of children sharing a lesson may vary, and will be determined by the music co-ordinator in liaison with the instrumental teacher, according to what best meets the educational needs of the children in that group. Fees are charged as a termly lump sum to be billed in advance at the beginning of each term, and payment must be received before lessons can be taken. (Because peripatetic tuition must be booked well in advance, this represents a cost commitment by the school and therefore if a child wishes to cease lessons, notice must be given according to the terms of agreement which parents are asked to sign when they enrol their child for lessons). If the required notice is not received, the school reserves the right to charge a cancellation fee to help recover costs incurred by the school. This charge may however be waived if another child from the waiting list can fill the vacancy.

Parents/carers are responsible for providing the instrument and any tuition books and accessories needed, and also for meeting the cost of any examination fees (exams are however optional). To help parents with the sometimes quite considerable outlay required in purchasing an instrument, the school does have a policy for the assisted purchase of musical instruments (see below).



In this MAT, children who are **currently eligible for Free School Meals**, who wish to have specialist instrumental tuition during school hours will be entitled to free tuition for one instrument. Carers must contact the Inclusion Deputy Head to discuss this.

### **Assisted Instrument Purchase Scheme**

The school may order a musical instrument on a pupil's behalf where it is to be used for instrumental lessons in school. This is a recognised scheme authorised by HM Revenue and Customs, and enables parents to purchase the instrument through the school in effect VAT-free. Parents will be notified of the scheme when their child signs up for instrumental lessons, and may apply to the Senior Finance Officer for further details and an application form.

### **Breakfast Club/After school Club**

In this MAT, there is Breakfast and After School Club provision. Each school runs its own Breakfast Club. As the timings of each Breakfast Club vary, each school charges a set price for attendance. This price is reviewed annually.

An external company provide the After School Club and is located, for all 4 schools, at Canford Heath Infant School.

Attendance at both of these clubs is optional and therefore parents/carers will be expected to pay for their child's participation. Because places must be booked in advance, this represents a cost commitment by the school and therefore if a child wishes to cease attendance, notice must be given according to the terms of agreement which parents are asked to sign when they enrol their child for a place.

### **Charging for breakages, damage or loss**

The school will seek to recover the costs incurred as a result of any item of school property being damaged, broken or lost as a result of misbehaviour, thoughtless behaviour or carelessness. In the event of books being lost or damaged, parents/carers will be asked to replace or refund the total cost of each book.

### **Extra-Curricular (Out of School Hours) Activities**

Every effort will be made to provide extra-curricular activities free of charge whenever possible. However, the school is not permitted to subsidise extra-curricular activities from delegated government funding, and so must make a charge for some optional activities where costs are incurred. This policy draws a distinction between two types of extra-curricular provision: activities run by the school, and those run by external providers who use the school premises.

In the case of school-run activities, any charge will be kept to a minimum and will be made only to cover costs where these are incurred. To minimise administration time and costs, payment of charges will usually be requested in advance as a termly or half-termly amount depending on the number of weeks for which a pupil signs up to participate, but in cases of hardship, parents may make a request to spread the cost by paying weekly. Either way, payment must be received in advance of the session(s) and is non-refundable except in exceptional circumstances (see refund policy).



In the case of clubs run by external providers, these providers are independent of the school's charging policy and are permitted to set their own rates which they charge directly to parents, however the school will always seek to negotiate the best value arrangement on behalf of pupils. Furthermore, it is the school's policy that any income from letting the school's premises to these providers may be used to subsidise provision of school-led activities and to support the school's remissions policy.

### **Remissions Policy**

The school will always endeavour to provide activities free of charge whenever possible, and to set charges to minimum levels so as not to preclude children from accessing provision. However, in cases where a charge must be made, such as instrumental music tuition, the school has a remissions policy which aims, within the limitations outlined below, to offer assistance to some pupils.

If families are experiencing financial hardship which may prevent a pupil's participation in a particular activity, and are in receipt of means-tested state benefits including entitlement to free school meals, they are invited to approach the school in confidence, through their child's teacher, Head of School or Trust Business Manager, to find out whether they may be able to apply for some remission of charges. All such applications will be treated with the utmost discretion and every effort will be made to assist parents in need. However, the school's ability to remit charges will be limited: firstly by the number of eligible families who apply in each case, priority being given to children who have not previously had the opportunity to attend an activity so far during the year, and secondly by the extent of available funds allocated for this purpose from the school's own income generation activities, as it is not permitted to use delegated government funding for this purpose. (Please see Pupil Premium leaflet)

This policy applies to all school-led activities including residential visits, however we regret that it is not possible to consider remission of charges for activities out of school hours which are run by external providers.

### **Refund Policy**

Parents may ask for a refund of voluntary contributions if their child misses a school trip due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. However, in cases where the school has already incurred a direct and non-recoverable cost in including the child on the trip (for example, purchase of a ticket which cannot be returned or deposit for a residential) then no refund will be made, as an individual cost will have been incurred by the school.

This refund policy does not apply to charges made for out-of-hours or optional activities, which are non-refundable except in the event of cancellation by the school. Where a child drops out of a school-led club or extra-curricular activity which has been paid for in advance, a discretionary refund may be considered for the unattended sessions only if the cost may be recovered by offering the place to another child.

### **Fundraising Activities**

The school may hold events such as sponsor days during the year as a means of raising extra funds to support areas of provision not covered by the delegated budget, such as school trips and school-led extra-curricular activities. Funds raised in this way



may also be used to support the school's remissions policy. All children will participate in these activities which take place during school hours, but sponsorship is, of course, voluntary.

### **Pupil Premium Children**

Schools can use the Pupil Premium money to help give children the best support we possibly can. One way we use Pupil Premium money is to offer support when they enter school for the first time.

All Pupil Premium children are entitled to a credit of £50.00 on account and this can be used to pay for / towards the following:

#### **Infant Schools**

- School jumper / cardigan
- Book bag and PE bag
- School milk
- Trips and visits

#### **Junior Schools**

- School jumper / cardigan and tie
- School milk
- Hot school lunches
- Trips and visits

### **Current Eligible Free School Meal Children**

In addition, children who are currently eligible for of Free School Meals will be entitled to receive the following:

#### **Infant Schools**

- Free music tuition for one instrument per school year

#### **Junior Schools**

- Free music tuition for one instrument per school year
- Help with Year 6 residential trip costs – only required to pay the deposit

Please obtain a Pupil Premium leaflet from the school office to see if your child is eligible to receive this extra funding.

Date adopted by Trust Board: September 2019

Date to be reviewed: September 2021

