



St Mary's C E Primary School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996 and the Department for Education (DfE) guidance *Charging for School Activities*.

At St Mary's, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils are able to participate fully in the educational opportunities and experiences offered by the school. In keeping with our inclusive ethos, no pupil should be disadvantaged or excluded from an activity because of their family's financial circumstances.

This policy sets out the circumstances in which the school may make a charge, request a voluntary contribution or offer full or partial remission of charges, in accordance with the law and DfE guidance.

Principles

The Governing Body is committed to the following principles:

- Education provided during school hours will be free of charge, except where a charge is expressly permitted by law.
- No charge will be made for education or activities where charging is prohibited by legislation.
- Where charges are permitted, they will be reasonable and will be clearly communicated to parents and carers in advance.
- Requests for voluntary contributions will always make clear that there is no obligation to contribute.
- No pupil will be treated differently, excluded or disadvantaged because their parent or carer is unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.
- The school will seek to ensure that financial circumstances do not create unnecessary barriers to pupils' participation in school life.

Activities for which no charge will be made

No charge will be made for:

- education provided during school hours, including the provision of materials, books, instruments or other equipment necessary for that education;
- education provided outside school hours where it is required as part of the National Curriculum, a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the

- pupil is being prepared at the school, or religious education;
- instrumental or vocal tuition where it forms part of the National Curriculum or is provided as part of the statutory curriculum;
- entry for a prescribed public examination where the pupil has been prepared for that examination by the school;
- transport provided by the school where it is required in order for a pupil to receive education for which the school may not make a charge.

Nothing in this policy prevents the school from inviting parents and carers to provide materials or ingredients voluntarily where permitted by law, provided that no pupil is disadvantaged because their family is unable or unwilling to do so.

Voluntary contributions

The school may invite parents and carers to make voluntary contributions towards activities or experiences that enrich pupils' education, including:

- educational visits and trips;
- visiting speakers, performers or theatre groups;
- sporting activities involving additional costs or transport; and
- other enrichment opportunities.

Where voluntary contributions are requested:

- it will be made clear that there is **no obligation to contribute**;
- no pupil will be treated differently according to whether or not their parent or carer has contributed;
- no pupil will be excluded from an activity because their parent or carer is unable or unwilling to contribute; and
- parents and carers will be given clear information about the purpose of the contribution and, where appropriate, the overall cost of the activity.

Where insufficient voluntary contributions are received and the school is unable to meet the remaining cost from other funds, the activity may have to be cancelled. Parents and carers will be informed of this possibility when contributions are requested.

Activities for which charges may be made (“Optional Extras”)

The school may make a charge for certain activities provided in addition to the education that pupils are entitled to receive free of charge. These are known as **optional extras**.

Charges may be made for:

- education or activities provided outside school hours where they are not:
 - part of the National Curriculum;
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared by the school; or
 - part of religious education;
- examination entry fees where a pupil has not been prepared for the examination by the school;
- transport provided in connection with an optional extra, but only where a charge for that transport is expressly permitted by law;

- board and lodging on residential visits, subject to the remission arrangements set out in the Remissions and Financial Assistance section of this policy;
- extended school provision, including chargeable breakfast club provision beyond any statutory free breakfast entitlement, after-school clubs and other optional wraparound or enrichment activities;
- individual or group instrumental or vocal tuition provided at the request of a parent or carer, where charging is permitted by law; and
- materials or ingredients where parents or carers have indicated in advance that they wish their child to own or take home the finished product.

Where a charge is made for an optional extra:

- participation will be a matter of parental choice;
- parental agreement to meet the charge will be obtained before the activity or provision takes place;
- the charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity to the participating pupil;
- the charge will not include an element of profit or be used to subsidise pupils whose parents or carers are unable or unwilling to pay;
- where appropriate, the charge may include the cost of materials, equipment, buildings or accommodation and staff specifically engaged to provide the optional extra, where permitted by law; and
- any remission or financial assistance available under this policy will be applied appropriately.

Residential Visits

The school may charge for the cost of **board and lodging** on residential visits. Any charge made will not exceed the actual cost of providing the board and lodging.

No charge will be made for:

- education provided on a residential visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided outside school hours where it forms part of the National Curriculum, religious education, or a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared by the school; or
- the cost of supply teachers engaged to cover teachers who are absent from school while accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Where parents or carers are entitled to statutory remission of board and lodging charges, the school will apply this in accordance with the qualifying criteria set out in the Remissions and Financial Assistance section of this policy.

Parents and carers will be informed of the cost of a residential visit, the basis of any charge or voluntary contribution being requested, and the availability of remission or financial assistance.

Music Tuition

Music education provided as part of the National Curriculum will be provided free of charge.

The school may make a charge for individual or group instrumental or vocal tuition where:

- the tuition is provided at the request of a pupil's parent or carer; and
- the tuition is not required as part of the National Curriculum or other provision for which charging is prohibited by law.

Any charge made will reflect the cost of providing the tuition and parents and carers will be informed of the cost before agreeing to the provision.

No charge will be made for instrumental or vocal tuition provided as part of the National Curriculum or where legislation otherwise requires the tuition to be provided free of charge.

In accordance with the Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, no charge will be made for instrumental or vocal tuition provided to a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

Transport

No charge will be made for transport where charging is prohibited by law. This includes transport that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide, transport required to enable a pupil to receive education for which no charge may lawfully be made, and transport provided in connection with an educational visit where charging is prohibited.

Where transport forms part of an optional extra for which charging is permitted by law, any charge will be calculated in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and will not exceed the actual cost attributable to the participating pupil.

Parents and carers will be informed in advance where a lawful charge applies and, where appropriate, of any remission or financial assistance that may be available.

Remissions and Financial Assistance

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring, wherever reasonably possible, that financial circumstances do not prevent pupils from participating fully in the educational opportunities and experiences offered by the school.

Statutory remission

Where a residential visit takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, or otherwise meets the statutory criteria for education for which no charge may be made, parents and carers who meet the relevant eligibility criteria will be entitled to full remission of charges for board and lodging.

Eligibility for statutory remission will be determined in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and current Department for Education guidance.

Parents and carers will be informed of their right to claim remission where applicable and may be asked to provide appropriate evidence of eligibility. Any information provided will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Discretionary financial assistance

The school recognises that families may experience financial difficulty even where they do not meet the criteria for statutory remission.

Subject to the availability of school funds, the school may therefore provide full or partial financial assistance towards the cost of chargeable activities or other school experiences where this would help to remove a financial barrier to a pupil's participation.

Requests for financial assistance will be considered sensitively and confidentially on an individual basis. Parents and carers who may require support are encouraged to contact the school.

Any discretionary assistance will be considered fairly and consistently, taking account of the individual circumstances and the resources available to the school.

Copies of Documents and Information

The school will provide information and documents free of charge where required by law.

Where legislation permits the school to make a charge for providing copies of documents or records, any charge will be reasonable and will not exceed the cost permitted by the relevant legislation.

Requests for access to personal information, including Subject Access Requests, will be handled in accordance with current data protection legislation and the school's Data Protection Policy. In most circumstances, no charge will be made for responding to a Subject Access Request.

Parents and carers have statutory rights in relation to access to their child's educational record. Where a charge for providing a copy of an educational record is permitted by law, any charge will not exceed the cost of supplying the copy.

Any request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 will be dealt with in accordance with the legislation and the school's Freedom of Information arrangements.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently across the school and that any charges, requests for voluntary contributions and arrangements for financial assistance are made in accordance with this policy.

The Governing Body will oversee the school's charging and remissions arrangements and will ensure that they remain consistent with relevant legislation and Department for Education guidance.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory requirements or Department for Education guidance.

The school will ensure that the current Charging and Remissions Policy is published on the school website and is accessible to parents, carers and other members of the school community.

Approved by: Governing Body

Date approved: September 2026

Review cycle: Annual, or sooner if required

Next review due: September 2027

