

1. Charging Policy

1.1 Introduction

The school recognises the significant benefit that pupils gain from extending and enriching the curriculum to include educational visits - both day and residential, art-related performances, sporting and other activities both in and out of school. This document sets out the school's policy for charging for school-organised educational and sports events and activities.

1.2 Objectives

The policy will ensure a consistent and fair approach to charging, in-line with the objectives of the 1988 Education Reform Act's provisions for charges for school activities (see Appendix A).

1.3 Overall Policy

It is the school's overall policy to provide a range of opportunities for enrichment and enhancement of the school curriculum through activities beyond simple classroom-based learning. All pupils will be provided with the same, equal, opportunities, regardless of financial circumstances or ability to pay.

Where such activities are not core to the curriculum, and involve additional costs, the school will invite parents to make voluntary financial contributions to ensure the viability of the activity and the sustainability of the school's budget, but no pupil will be disadvantaged by an inability to meet the voluntary contribution.

Specific policies for different activities and circumstances are set out within this policy document.

1.4 Responsibilities

The school will be responsible for:

- Maintaining and publishing this charging policy
- Ensuring that all requests made for financial contributions are consistent with the policy
- Ensuring that families are made aware of the school's provisions for financial support where it is aware of their circumstances.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy
- Ensuring that all activities are planned, and requests made, in line with the provisions of the policy
- Processing requests for financial support from individual families in a fair and equitable way.

- Deciding whether activities are viable based on the level of voluntary contributions made.
- Seeking agreement from the Governing Body's nominated representatives where additional funding from the school is necessary to ensure that activities are viable.

The Governing Body will be responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving the charging policy.
- Ensuring that the policy is fair and equitable and consistent with the relevant legislation.

1.5 Specific policies

1.5.1 Individual activities

- Individual activities (e.g. music tuition) will be offered on the basis of availability and suitability to those pupils who express an interest or display a suitability or aptitude.
- A family's financial ability to fund the activity will never be a criterion in the offer of activities to individual children.
- No pupil will be disadvantaged by an inability to pay. The school will offer financial support, consistent with the policies defined in 1.5.4.

1.5.2 Group activities (in-school)

- The school will seek to fund group and whole-school activities from the school fund wherever possible.
- Where additional funding is required to make such activities viable, financial contributions will be invited, based on the cost to the school.
- No pupil will be excluded from any in-school activity due to non-payment.
- Where levels of voluntary contribution are insufficient for an activity to be viable, the school will cancel the activity. Any contributions made by parents will be refunded in full.

1.5.3 Group activities (out-of-school)

Group and whole-school activities carried out away from the school will often involve significant costs that require external support to make them viable.

- Where the school is unable to fund such activities itself, or obtain independent external funding (e.g. through sponsorship):
 - A voluntary contribution will be sought from parents of involved pupils, based on the cost to the school.
 - No pupil will be disadvantaged by an inability to pay. The school will offer financial support, consistent with the policies defined in 1.5.4.
 - Where levels of voluntary contribution are insufficient for an activity to be viable, the school will cancel the activity. Any contributions made by parents will be refunded in full.

1.5.4 Offers of financial support

- Where appropriate, the school will:
 - Proactively offer to cover the costs of individual pupils where circumstances are known to the school (including, but not limited to, families known to be eligible for free school meals).
 - Respond to individual requests from parents where the school is made aware of individual circumstances that were not previously known to it.
- Where the school is unable to support the funding of pupils due to limitations in its own budget then the activity will be withdrawn for all pupils.

1.5.5 Loss and damage

The school reserves the right to make reasonable charges to parents for non-accidental breakages/damage/loss of equipment and books as a result of a child's misbehaviour, based on cost of replacement.

1.6 Monitoring and review

This policy will be subject to review every two years.

The school will amend the policy at other times where necessary at any stage to comply with statutory or other requirements.

1.7 Associated documents

None

1.8 Appendices

Appendix I – Objectives of the Education Reform Act 1988 – Charging for school activities

APPENDIX I

Objectives of the Education Reform Act 1988 - Charges for School Activities

The objectives of the charging provision in the 1988 Act are:

- to maintain the right to free school education.
- to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their Parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- to emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- to confirm the right of schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours.