

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

"Live, love and learn in a caring Christian Community"

The Governing Body believes that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it must be free. However, the school may charge for activities outside of school hours where these are not a necessary part of the national curriculum.

Voluntary Contributions

The Head teacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;
- school equipment;
- school funds generally.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary, though, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

If a child deliberately breaks or vandalises school property, the parents will be asked to make a contribution towards replacing the item or any costs associated with making it good.

Residential Trips

Schools are permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips, even if they occur mainly during school time. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision. However, the school cannot charge for the educational or travel elements.

Where the trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of the charge for board and lodging:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

Instrumental Music Lessons

A charge is permitted for vocal or instrumental music tuition undertaken in school hours either individually or to groups of any size provided that the tuition is 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 the tuition.

Charges cannot be made if the tuition forms part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

School Building Fund

The Governing Body asks parents to make an annual contribution towards the school building fund. This money is used to pay for the Governing Body's 10% contribution to building projects.

Paying for information

If a member of the public, including parents, request a hard copy of any information held by the school, this will incur a cost.

All requests for single paper copies will incur a minimum cost of £1.00 to cover paper, photocopying and time. This figure excludes any additional postal charges. If the request means that the school has to do a lot of photocopying or printing, we will let you know the amount before fulfilling your request. Please note that an additional charge for postage will also be made.

Most information is available for free on our website: www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk