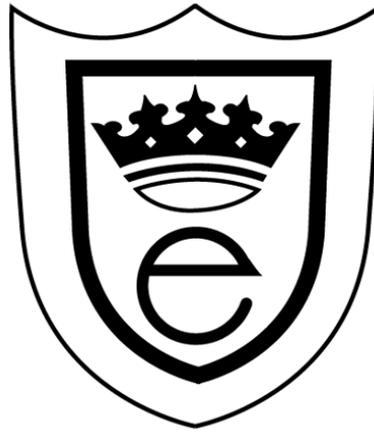


St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School



Charging and Remissions Policy

School Mission Statement and Values

Our mission at St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School is to educate our children to reach their full potential in the context of a Catholic community in which each individual shares, or is in sympathy with, the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Christian way of life.

Our core values of **equality, excellence, kindness, forgiveness, perseverance, friendship, courage, service and respect** were chosen by our pupils to be the overriding principles to which the whole school aspires, together with our golden rule, "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

We seek to make St Elizabeth's School a secure, happy and inclusive environment that is a place:

- of the highest quality teaching and learning;
- of compassion, co-operation and reconciliation;
- where each child is seen and appreciated as a unique individual;
- in which every child's talents are developed and their needs met;
- where mistakes are learning opportunities;
- in which each child is empowered to keep themselves safe and healthy;
- where endeavour and excellence are encouraged and celebrated;
- in which cultural diversity is respected and valued;
- where we worship together, share our Christian witness, draw strength from our local parishes and serve our wider community.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body every two years. The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in January 2017. It is due for review in January 2019.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Throughout the year there are likely to be day educational visits organized for classes in conjunction with their topic work, or visits to the school by Theatres or Workshops etc. Such visits play an important part in the school curriculum, extending the learning that is started in the classroom and no child is excluded for financial reasons.

Parents are invited to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of these visits, to enable the school to continue with such worthwhile activities. Details of the approximate cost will be sent home and, providing we are able to get the necessary support, we will confirm bookings and collect the money. There will be provision to pay by instalments if families request this. The school will have the right to cancel any advertised activity if insufficient voluntary contributions are received. (In such circumstances any contributions received will be refunded.)

It has always been the practice of St Elizabeth's School to deal sensitively and compassionately with those in genuine financial difficulty, so that no child should be disadvantaged. We shall continue to use discretion with regard to remission of charges, having regard to individual circumstances.

Statutory remissions for pupils whose parents receive income support or family credit will apply.

Where a charge is made in respect of individual pupils it will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. Charges will be made for:

1. Residential School Journeys

Board, lodging, travel and visit costs will be charged in all cases where a school activity involves pupils residing away from home.

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

Parents will, however provide the pocket money for the child and this will be collected at the time of the first instalment payment to confirm the parents' intention to allow the child to participate.

2. *Music Tuition*

The law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, but music tuition may be an exception, where such classes have been requested by the parent.

There will be no charge for

- class Music lessons,
- the class recorder lessons which are a part of the school's Music Curriculum
- first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

Charges will be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups to play a musical instrument, as provided by the Richmond Music Trust. The charge will be made and collected by the Music Trust.

3. *Optional Extras*

Charges will be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. At St Elizabeth's 'optional extras' comprise clubs / out of school activities that do not form part of the National Curriculum. The cost of optional extras will be sufficient to cover the following:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff costs
- the cost of teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra.

4. *Items made by the pupils in Cookery, Design Technology, etc.* according to normal practice, if the children's parents wish them to own (or eat) them.

5. *Replacing or repairing school buildings or property damaged or lost* where this is a result of a pupil's deliberate or inappropriate action. In the event of accidental damage parents will be requested to make a contribution to the cost.

As a Church School community the children will also be asked from time to time to volunteer to raise funds for charitable purposes as well as to meet various needs of the school.

References:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/charging%20for%20school%20activities.pdf>

Charging for school activities: Advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff, and local authorities October 2014

Appendix One: CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES Revised October 2014

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{Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus.

This document is available online at: www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a charging policy?

A. Under the charging provisions set out in legislation, governing bodies and local authorities of state funded schools may choose to charge for certain defined activities, but only if they have first drawn-up charging and remissions policies. These policies should be made available to parents on request.

Q. How does this relate to academies?

A. Academies (including free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges) are required through their funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

Q. A visit involving staying overnight has been arranged for children at my school. Can the school charge for this?

A. Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home, the school is allowed to make a charge for board and lodging. This is with the exception of pupils whose parents are receiving: Universal Credit; Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190 FY 13/14) and an income related employment and support allowance. Since April 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria. The head teacher must inform all parents of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving these benefits.

Q. With regard to the remission of board and lodging payments, can you please explain who pays for the expense, would it come out of the school budget or is there a grant available to claim?

A. Although the criteria for being eligible for the remission of charges for board and lodgings is the same as free school meals, that is where the similarity ends. The costs involved in the remission of board and lodgings are to be borne by the school from their contingency funds. There is no return to be completed to re-claim the money back.

Q. Can governing bodies charge for educating children in maintained schools and academies?

A. The local authority or governing body cannot charge for education that takes place in school hours. Nor can they charge for activities that take place outside school hours if these are part of the national curriculum, necessary as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. They can charge for permitted 'optional

extras', provided they have drawn up a statement of general policy on charging and given details of 'optional extras' they intend to charge for. The governing body's policy does not have to be the same as the local authority's policy, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. The Revised Charging and Remissions Policy was adopted by the Governing Body in February 2014

Q. Our school has a large number of pupils eligible for free school meals; this means that they would also receive remission for board and lodgings expenses for residential school visits. How can the school fund/organize residential visits?

A. Government funding for schools to each local authority recognises the different needs of each area. In terms of the allocation to schools, each local authority sets a funding formula which is agreed with the local schools forum. All local authorities are required to include an element in their formula to reflect the needs of deprived pupils. The amount that individual schools receive from the local authority reflects their relative need compared with other local schools.

In addition, schools receive pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, based largely on those who are eligible for free school meals. This funding is provided by the Government to raise the attainment of eligible pupils and narrow the attainment gap between eligible pupils and their peers. It is for head teachers and school governing bodies to decide how to use their formula funding and pupil premium allocation.

Schools cannot exclude children from taking part in an activity that is part of the national curriculum purely on the grounds that the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make, a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

If there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

Q. Can a school charge for an activity that takes place out of school hours?

A. This kind of activity is often referred to as an 'optional extra'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. See advice on optional extras on page 5.

The actual charge for the optional extra cannot exceed the actual cost of the provision. Schools cannot and must not make a profit from charging for optional extras. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Q. Can a school ask parents for voluntary contributions?

A. Schools may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. It should be remembered that education provided during school hours must be free. This includes materials, equipment, and transport provided in school hours by the local authority or by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. Governing bodies should also clearly explain that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently, and that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

Q. The school has sent letters out to parents asking for contributions towards a school visit, do parents have to pay?

A. Head teachers or governing bodies may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

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

Children of parents who are unable, or unwilling, to contribute may not be discriminated against. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of the visit, or The Revised Charging and Remissions Policy was adopted by the Governing Body in February 2014 activity, and there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall, then the school should cancel the activity/visit. It would be advisable to make parents aware of a possible cancellation to the activity/visit if insufficient voluntary contributions are received from the outset.

Q. What happens if the school is not able to raise enough voluntary contributions to cover costs?

A. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, for example school funds and/or fundraising activities, then it must be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions should be made clear in the information sent to parents.

Q. What if a parent is unable, or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution? How does this affect their child(ren)?

A. The school cannot exclude a child from taking part in an activity that is part of the national curriculum purely on the grounds that you, the parent or carer, cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution. This can clearly place schools in some difficulty on occasions where a number of parents/carers might be in such a position. The school then has to decide whether they can cover the costs of such activity from within the budget or by fundraising, or whether the activity has to be cancelled.

Q. What support can a school offer a parent/carers who has difficulty making a financial contribution?

A. Schools must ensure that parents in receipt of Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and

Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14) are aware of the support available to them when being asked for contributions toward the costs of school visits. Some schools also have funds available to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. Parents should be encouraged to speak to the head teacher in order to establish if such funding arrangements exist.

No charge may be made if there is a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination. In addition, if the activity is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel for any pupil, not just those whose parents are in receipt of benefits.

Q. What about charges for transport during school hours?

A. Any transport provided by the school in school hours will be provided free of charge (though a voluntary contribution could be requested).

Q. Can the school charge for something like cooking ingredients or materials needed for a technology lesson?

A. The school can make a charge to cover the costs of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

Q. Can a school make a charge to pay for the administration required as part of the admission process?

A. Paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'Schools Admission Code 2012' rules out requests from admission authorities for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process. Legislation prevents state funded schools from charging fees for admission or for providing education during school hours. The Revised Charging and Remissions Policy was adopted by the Governing Body in February 2014

Q. Can a school ask for a direct debit to the school fund?

A. No. A school may ask for voluntary contributions, as long as it is clear that they are voluntary, but we are clear that state education should be free and we have no intention of changing this policy. No contributions may be sought as part of the admissions process.

Q. Can a school asked parents to contribute, (or pay in full) for the cost of a tablet PC?

A. Sections 451 and 454 of the Education Act 1996 prohibits schools from charging for education and the supply of materials, books, instruments or other equipment (this would include Tablets), during school hours. However, there is no prohibition on asking parents to make voluntary contributions; additionally there is a specific exception in the legislation which enables schools to charge for materials where the pupil's parent wishes them to own the materials. All contribution requests to parents must make clear that the contributions are voluntary and that, if a parent cannot make, or refuses to make a contribution, their children will not be treated any differently and will not be excluded from taking part in any activity or related equipment.

Q. What are community facilities?

A. Schools are allowed to provide facilities that can be used by the local community, for example out-of hours / holiday childcare or swimming pool sessions. These facilities further any charitable purpose for the benefit of pupils at the school or their families, or people who live or work in the locality in which the school is situated. Academies should seek guidance from the Charity Commission if they are in doubt. Advice from the Charity Commission can be found here Schools can charge for the use of these facilities, and a profit can also be generated, providing it is spent on the purposes of the school and or on community facilities.

Maintained schools should check the local authority's published financial "scheme" for maintained schools in their area for any rules about the carry of profit from one financial year to the next. Academies should determine fees and charges in accordance with chapter 6 of HM Treasury' Managing Public Money.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/guidanceandadvice/f00213976/school-charging>