



St. Clement's C. of E. Academy

Learning for Life, Anchored in Christ

Charging and Remission Policy

St. Clement's C. of E. Academy Charging and Remission Policy

Our vision is to inspire happy, **courageous**, independent, curious and creative life-long learners. We aim for all to achieve their full potential, striving both academically and socially with **humility** and **dignity**.

We believe that being anchored in Jesus Christ will guide us all with **hope**, **compassion** and **wisdom** in becoming successful members of a global community.

Learning for Life, Anchored in Christ

Serving the local community in the name of Christ since 1859

Introduction

St. Clement's C.E. Academy is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:-

- Participate fully in school curriculum;
- Contribute to all aspects of school life;
- Be a valued partner in the process of education.

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside the school and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents/guardians who are on low income.

We aim:-

- To make school activities accessible to all students regardless of family income;
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school;
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

We recognize that not all pupils who receive free school meals will be socially disadvantaged neither will all socially disadvantaged pupils be registered or qualify for free school meals therefore Pupil Premium will be used to support all pupil in school.

The development of a range of activities forms part of the school's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with a particular emphasis on the identification of specific resources to support such activities. It includes a number of key factors:-

- The value of certain activities in relation to age/needs of pupils;
- The cost of activity set against their educational value;
- How the activity will be paid for;
- The appropriate process for raising funding;
- An assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;
- An assessment of local facilities

Legislation

Education During School Hours The DFE in its guidance to school governors states that “education provided during school hours must be free”. The definition of “education” includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the LA or the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. It goes on to advise that “although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind) ...the essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.”

Education Outside School Hours

“Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 described activities which can be charged for as “optional extras”. It is up to the LA or governing body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.” The school makes a nominal charge of £1.50 per session for breakfast club and considers reasonable charges for any after school clubs run by external providers. Pupils in receipt of FSM will not be charged for wrap around provision.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case. Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided 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. The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Currently there are no individual music tuition sessions held at the school.

Residential Activity

For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the costs of the travel. However, the actual cost of board and lodging of a residential visit may be charged, but must be remitted in full for families in receipt of specified benefits. (see DFE Charging for School Activities January 2018). If the visit is deemed to be outside of school time, the full cost of the visit may be charged. Any remission of charges is at the discretion of the school/governors. The Head should tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits. All the relevant legislation is contained in the Education Act 1996:

Transport

Schools cannot charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not: a) part of the national curriculum; b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
 - board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions). In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:
 - any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
 - the cost of buildings and accommodation in connection with the optional extra;
 - non-teaching staff in connection with the optional extra;
 - teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
 - the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must 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.

Furthermore, in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

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 prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Remissions Policy

To ensure that access to activities and outcomes reflect intentions, St.Clement's C.E. Academy will implement the following Remissions Policy.

The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which, people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Birmingham City Council defines people in receipt of Housing Benefit and their dependants as living on the margins of poverty. Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals.

Informing Parents

St.Clement's C.E. Academy will follow the DFE Guidelines which states that "The LA or governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of General Policy on Charging ... A Policy Statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for, and explain when charges will be made... Parents need to know how the charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the costs (or even get it free). A summary of "this information" must be included in the prospectus published by the school." "If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual costs. If further funds need to be raised ... this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising." "If voluntary contributions are not sufficient an activity may be cancelled.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. (Voluntary contributions may be requested from parents to cover the cost of educational visits such as materials, bus/train fares, entrance fees.)

The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

School Meals Debts

In the case of school meals debt, governors will refer to the Schools Meals Debt Policy and look at each individual case and agree action.

Implementation

Planning, as a part of the process of budget building is essential to developing a charging policy at St. Clement's which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the school and taking into consideration the projected number of children (including known remissions), cost per head and a breakdown of transportation costs, entry fees, discounts, teacher costs etc.

Such a process however, should not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the school to take advantage of opportunities which arise during the course of the year. These will be implemented in a way which is consistent with the school's overall policy.

General

The Charging and Remissions policy for St. Clement's C of E Academy will, for the time being, be as follows:

- The Governors reserve the right to make charges where the law allows
- Individual instrumental tuition, if able to be accommodated, at the wishes of parents, will be on the understanding that parents meet the full tuition costs involved
- From time to time, it may be possible for costs of trips and activities to be subsidised either wholly or in part from private School Funds. Parents will be informed if such occasions arise
- Should the Governing Body choose to hold residential visits in school time, remission of Board and Lodging costs will be provided by the school to those who are receiving state benefits.

The Governing Body has instructed the Head Teacher to include in the school's Disciplinary Policy that parents will be asked to meet or contribute towards the costs of damage to or loss of school property arising out of individual pupil's behaviour.

Reviewed & Approved by Governors July 2022

To be reviewed: December 2024

Related Documents

DFE Charging for School Activities January 2018 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>

Further sources of information Associated resources (external links)

- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom <https://www.lotc.org.uk/>
- The Charity Commission <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

Other departmental advice and statutory guidance you may be interested in

- Home to School Transport Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Other departmental resources

- The Governors' Handbook <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>