



St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Mission Statement

Building firm foundations for life

- We achieve our best
- We care for others
- We grow in faith

Introduction

St Peter's Catholic Primary School is committed to the general principle of free education, but also recognises that, as a voluntary aided school, voluntary contributions by parents can significantly enhance the quality of the school's provision by supporting a range of additional activities.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the circumstances in which charging for school activities is (and where it is not) permissible, and the kinds of activities for which voluntary contributions may be requested. This policy is written in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1996, and the corresponding guidance document 'Charging for School Activities' (DFE, 2014). The 1988 Education Act draws a distinction between the term charges which are considered obligatory costs and "voluntary contributions".

Under the terms of the 1996 Act, the school *cannot* charge for:

- an admission application
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of materials, books etc.)
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for, or part of religious education
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum

The school *can* charge for:

- any materials, books or equipment where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- optional extras; such extras would include education outside of school hours where it is not part of the National Curriculum; board and lodging for pupils on residential journeys
- music and vocal tuition

The legislation described above does not prevent the Governing Body from asking for a voluntary contribution for any school activity.

Purpose

Educational activities, whether inside or outside the school, are integral to school life and such we aim:

- to make school activities accessible to all children
- to encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the educational experience of the child and enrich the national curriculum
- to provide activities at a minimum cost to parents and the school

The range of activities offered depends upon 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
- an assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way
- an understanding of the various types of activities involved – for example, educational visits, music tuition, materials for practical work
- additional costs that need to be factored in such as the need for pocket money

Voluntary Contributions

When organising school trips or visits to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents/carers to contribute to the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, the trip maybe cancelled and parents/carers are made aware of this at the outset. Whenever possible, the school will give sufficient notice to allow parent/carers to pay by instalment. Voluntary contributions can be made electronically via the payments section of Parentmail - <https://pmx.parentmail.co.uk>

Any trip may include children whose parents/carers have not paid any contribution. The school will not treat these children differently from any other child.

Parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher if there are circumstances preventing them from making voluntary contributions because this will impact on the finances available for providing future planned activities for the pupils. These discussions will be undertaken sensitively and will be private and confidential, (see Remissions below).

Any shortfall in voluntary contributions for trips or visits will be covered the by School Fund, (see Parent/Carers' Donation to School Fund, below), or by the school's budget at the Headteacher's discretion.

Parents/carers have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information upon request.

The following is a list of additional activities, organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums
- sporting activities
- outdoor adventure activities
- visits to or by a theatre company
- school trips
- musical events
- transport

Parents will be kept informed of forthcoming additional activities on a termly, and where possible, yearly basis via the school website and Parentmail. However, the school reserves

the right to take advantage of any opportunities that have not been planned for but which arise. The school aims for the children to experience one activity or visit per term.

Residential visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, the educational cost of the trip is funded through parent/carer voluntary contributions and this will include the cost of board and lodgings.

In the case where a parent/carer indicates that their child will not be joining a residential visit, the school will make discreet enquiries to see if the school can help in some way to enable the child to attend.

Swimming

Swimming lessons form part of the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2. As this is not a resource which can be provided on site and is therefore an external charge to the school, a voluntary contribution is requested from parents/carers to pay for the cost of the lessons and for transportation to and from the swimming pool, if required.

Music tuition

Individual or small-group music tuition is an additional curriculum activity, and not part of the National Curriculum. Charges are made for these lessons except in the case of children in care.

After school and lunch time activities

The school offers additional activities after school and during lunch breaks. The school reserves the right to request a small voluntary contribution for these sessions, if necessary.

Activities run by a third party

Activities run by a third party, which take place outside of school hours, are considered optional extra and parents will be charged directly by the outside agencies concerned. Parents/carers are provided with details of clubs operated by a third party, for the exclusive use of St Peter's children, at the start of each term.

Breakage, Damage, Loss of School Property, Equipment and Books:

There is no statutory reference to breakage or damage to school property in the 1996 Act. The Governing Body has decided in the absence of such, to delegate to the Headteacher the discretion to seek financial compensation from parents/carers for damage to, or breakage/loss of school property or equipment, where this was caused by deliberate or willful behaviour on the part of their child.

Remissions

The school will inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the relevant benefits that they may be entitled to full or partial remission of charges for school activities and visits.

Relevant benefits have been aligned with the Free School Meals criteria based on entitlement to the following:

- 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 that the parent is 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 the parent stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – provided annual net earned income is no more than £7,400 as assessed by earnings from up to three of the most recent assessment periods.

In addition, full or partial remission of charges may be made for children for certain activities or visits on a case by case basis as part of the school's Pupil Premium expenditure.

Refunds

In the event that a child is unable to attend a visit or activity for which a parent/carer has paid or made a voluntary contribution, the school will apply to the activity providers for a refund for the child and, where a refund is received, this will be passed to the parent/carer concerned.

Parent/Carer Donations to the School Fund

In addition to the voluntary contribution requested from parents/carers for specific trips and activities, parents/carers are also asked to make voluntary donations to the School Fund and these funds are then used to subsidise or pay for the cost of a number of activities throughout the whole year with the aim of making school activities more financially manageable for parents/carers. In the past, the Friends of St. Peter's have made contributions to the School Fund for this purpose.

Parents/carers may choose to make their donation to School Fund on an annual or termly basis, via the payments section of Parentmail, or they can set up a Standing Order with their bank. The suggested amount of donation from each family will be agreed by the school Governors. The school will notify all parents/carers of any change and will encourage prompt payment from all parents/carers.

How the School Fund is used is the decision of the Headteacher who will report to the Governors' Resources Committee on school fund expenditure. School Fund accounts are audited annually.

Parent/Carer Donations to the Building and Resources Fund

Parents/carers are asked to make voluntary donations to the Building and Resources Fund. This fund pays for the essential upkeep of the school buildings as well as improvements to the learning environment.

As a Voluntary Aided Catholic School St Peter's is not fully funded by the Department for Education and has to raise 10 per cent. of the cost of maintaining the school buildings each

year. In order to raise the required funds reliance is placed on the generosity and support of our parents/carers as well as the parishes the school serves.

Parents/carers may choose to make a one-off donation via the school office or Parentmail, or to set up a Standing Order with their bank. The suggested amount of donation from each family will be agreed by the Governors. The school will notify all parents/carers of any change and will encourage prompt payment.

How the Building and Resources Fund is used is the decision of the Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher, senior management, staff, pupils and parents/carers, and is reported at the Governors' Resources Committee. The Building and Resources Fund accounts are reviewed annually by a Governor not connected with the operation of the Fund or its associated bank account, or alternatively by a non-Governor accounting professional.

Complaints

St Peter's has a formal complaints procedure and if parents/carers are unhappy with the application of the Charging and Remissions Policy, they should in the first instance discuss the matter with the Headteacher before pursuing this. Copies of the full complaints procedure are available from the school, and may also be downloaded from the school website.

Policy Date: Spring 2024

Review Date: Spring 2025

Resources Committee