St Mary's CE Primary Charging and Remissions Policy January 2016

1 Corinthians 16:14

Reviewed January 2016 Presented to Governors: …….

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is a warm, friendly and welcoming Church school that provides high quality education for all its pupils. As a Church school we hold our Christian values at the heart of everything we do. These are: Love; Respect; Determination; Courage; Compassion; and Honesty.

It is very important to us that the children are happy and experience the best education possible. We value strong links and a close partnership between home, church and school and recognise the importance of trust and shared responsibility in education.

St Mary's CE Primary School Charging and Remissions Policy

Rationale

At St Mary's CE Primary School we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curriculum 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 are offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Introduction

It is a statutory requirement that Local Authorities (LAs) and Governing Bodies determine and keep under review their policy on charging and remissions within the framework of the legislation. It is for individual governing bodies to determine their policy in relation to the Council's policy. The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than the Council's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. Schools must maintain a written statement of their policy and make it available to parents on request.
Neither an LA nor a school can make charges for school activities unless a policy is in existence.

The objectives of the charging provision of the legislation 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 LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours;
- to confirm the right of LAs and 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.

Legislation

The legislation:

- enables charges for education activities to be raised only in certain circumstances;
- enables voluntary contributions in support of any activity to be sought;
- requires a policy which, as a minimum, provides for complete remission of any charges otherwise payable in respect of board and lodging provided for a pupil on a residential trip where it takes place within specific criteria referred to in the legislation and where the pupil's parent(s) are in receipt of specified state benefits.

The Policy

The Policy for charging and remission of charges is as follows:

Governing Bodies be authorised to continue to maintain a charging and remissions policy in accordance with legislation if they wish to charge parents for any or all of those activities for which charges are permitted, as listed below:

Musical Instrument Tuition

Costs associated with tuition in playing a musical instrument where the tuition is provided either individually or to a group of not more than four pupils, unless the tuition is provided as part of a syllabus for prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum.

Public Examinations

The cost of:

- entering a pupil for public examination not prescribed in regulations and for preparing the pupil for such an examination outside school hours;
- entering a pupil for a prescribed public examination where no preparation, or no further preparation in the case of resits, has been provided by the school;
- public examination fees where a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet the examination requirement for any public examination.

Materials, Books, Instruments or Other Equipment

The cost for materials used in school where a parent indicates in advance that they or the pupil wishes to own the finished article which incorporates the materials. Any charge will not exceed the cost of the materials. Alternatively, the parent may be required to provide the materials in question.

Board and Lodgings

The costs of board and lodgings (not exceeding the actual cost) on residential visits, subject to the complete remission of such charges on visits deemed to fall in school time for pupils whose parents are in receipt of specified state benefits as listed under Remissions below.

Education Outside School Hours

Any activity which takes place wholly or mainly outside school hours (as defined in the legislation) and is not provided as part of the syllabus for prescribed public examination and is not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education. Such an activity is defined as an ‘optional extra’ and may be charged for. Charges for ‘optional extras’ outside of school hours may include:

- travel, board and lodging for pupils
- materials, books, instruments and equipment
- entrance charges to facilities
- staff costs – both support and teacher costs (where a teacher/instructor has been engaged specifically to provide the activity. These teachers should be given a separate contract to provide the optional extra.)
- insurance.

With an 'optional extra':

- parents can choose whether their children attend or not;
- no profit can be included in any charges made – the charge is to be based on the actual cost of the activity;
- a charge will not include a share of the cost of any remissions. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund-raising.

(NB: when 50% or more of an activity, including travelling time, takes place during school hours no charge can be made).

Voluntary Charges

Governing Bodies be empowered to seek voluntary contributions in order to fund activities taking place wholly or mainly during school hours for which the costs cannot be met from the school's budget, providing that it is made clear to parents in writing that:

- any contribution is voluntary;
- the children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated differently from any other child in the school.

It is permissible to warn parents in advance that where an activity cannot take place without some support from parents, and there are insufficient voluntary contributions, the activity may be cancelled.

Damage to Property

A Governing Body may reserve the right to ask parents to contribute to the cost of repairs or of replacing defaced, damaged or lost property where this is a result of a pupil's inappropriate behaviour.

Remissions

The Governing Body be authorised to remit all charges payable in respect of board and lodgings for the duration of a residential trip if the parents are in receipt of the following state benefits:

i) Income Support (IS);
ii) Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (IBJSA);
iii) Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
iv) Child Tax Credit , provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs) does not exceed £16,190;
v) Guaranteed State Pension;
vi) An income-related employment and support allowance.

Governing Bodies also be empowered to remit charges for activities where costs can be reasonably and appropriately met from the school's budget. Schools will continue to be responsible for meeting the cost of any remission of charges arising from this policy.