St Mary's Church of England Primary School Charging and Remissions Policy

Adopted: November 2023 Review date: Autumn 2025

1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions;
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made;
- Apply the Charging and Remissions Policy in the context of our caring ethos and Christian vision and values.

2. School Vision

The school's Charging and Remissions Policy reflects our Christian vision:

"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34

Unconditional love underpins all we do at St Mary's Church of England Primary School. We value and embrace the individuality of every child as they discover, learn and flourish in a place of security and love. We are an inclusive school, welcoming all children with respect, understanding and dignity. We have a duty of care to the children and will demonstrate the compassion and understanding that allows all children to flourish. In the context of the Charging and Remissions Policy, the primary messages of the school's vision are that we must devise a policy that is fair and apply it consistently, so that the school is inclusive and all children are able to flourish.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Definitions

- **Charge**: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- **Remission**: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The governing body

The local governing board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The local governing body also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Finance Committee.

5.2 Headteachers

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently. The Headteacher will:

- Decide whether charges should be made in the event of damage to or loss of property;
- Determine the amount parents will be charged for activities such as clubs and 'wraparound' care;
- Decide whether or not financial assistance can be granted to parents, either through subsidising costs or not charging for activities;
- Decide whether an activity must be cancelled due to insufficient voluntary contributions.

5.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently and fairly, being mindful of the school's inclusive and compassionate vision for education;
- Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

5.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

6. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what we **cannot** charge for:

6.1 Education

- Admission applications
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of:
    - The national curriculum
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - Religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

6.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local 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 or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

6.3 Residential visits

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
    - The national curriculum
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - Religious education
    - Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

7. Where charges can be made

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

7.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see section 7.2)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 7.3)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school **and** the pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus

7.2 Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The Headteacher will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities. The charges, when determined, will be communicated to parents via letters, Parent Mail or on the school's website.

The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
    - The national curriculum
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - 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 or governing body has 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 (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

When 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

- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
- 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 will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

7.3 Music tuition

Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is not an essential part of the national curriculum and / or is provided at the request of the pupil's parents.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

Therefore, the school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

St Mary's C of E Primary school is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils including access to specialised music tuition. Therefore, charges made for music tuition within school hours may be remitted for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding (see section 11).

7.4 Residential visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

8. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 6 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

- School trips and educational visits
- Sports activities, such as matches, festivals or tournaments involving other schools
- Residential trips

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it may be cancelled.

9. Activities we charge for

The school will charge for the following activities:

- Before and after school clubs ('wraparound' care) – the charge covers the cost of staffing, food provided and consumable materials for activities, such as cooking
- Clubs, such as after-school sports and other activity clubs – the charge covers the cost of staffing, resources and materials needed for the activity and costs related to external providers
- Additional music tuition provided at the request of a pupil's parent

For regular activities, the charges for each activity will be determined by the Headteacher and reviewed when setting the annual budget in the summer term each year. The school reserves the right to alter charges if there are unforeseen, unexpected changes to the costs incurred, for example due to renegotiated contracts with suppliers. Parents will be informed of the charges if and when any changes are made.

9.1 Nursery

School Nursery provision includes:

- 15 hours of free 'universal' provision **(8:50am – 11:50 each school day)** for all children at no charge;
- Total of 30 hours of free Nursery provision, comprising 15 hours of free 'universal' provision (9:00am – midday each school day) PLUS 15 additional hours for those whose parents qualify for the free 30-hour childcare entitlement (finishing at 3:15pm, allowing for a short lunch break);
- Total of 30 hours of Nursery provision, comprising 15 hours of free 'universal' provision (9:00am – midday each school day) **PLUS 15 hours of paid provision (charged by the hour) for parents who do not qualify for free 30-hour childcare entitlement** (finishing at 3:15pm, allowing for a short lunch break). This gives parents who do not qualify the **option** of sending their child to school Nursery for the full day.

Further information about eligibility for the 30-hour childcare entitlement can be found at https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare.

Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours of funded, high quality flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional activities. The funding is to support the hours of early years provision. Therefore, we do make additional charges to cover extra provision, such as afternoon snacks and lunch supervision.

10. Activities that take place *partly* during school hours, on or off site

If half or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

If less than half of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. In cases where the majority of an activity takes place outside of school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. So, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a visit.

Please note that the lunch-break may be considered to be outside-school-hours for the purposes of this policy. Clubs or other activities during the lunch-break may be considered optional extras and may be charged for.

11. Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 7 and 9 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and will depend on the activity in question.

11.1 Remissions (Including Residential Trips)

St Mary's C of E Primary school is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it may be cancelled. Pupils will not be excluded on the basis of finances from any activity that goes ahead.

Each financial year, when setting the annual budget, the school allows for a fund to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on trips and access activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. If the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through this funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity may be cancelled. The school may agree to subsidise costs from the school budget or seek external funding to try to ensure an activity goes ahead before making the decision to cancel.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- 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 Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)

Parents should contact the school office if they wish to discuss charges or request financial assistance. Decision about whether charges should be remitted or subsidised lie with the Headteacher.

The identity of the child or parents who are seeking assistance with charges will not be disclosed to other parents under any circumstances.

12. Damages

Where school property has been willfully or recklessly damaged or lost by a pupil or parent, the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not charges will be made will be decided by the headteacher and dependent on the situation.

13. School Meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or 'universal' infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per meal agreed with the school's catering provider. Any changes to the charge for school meals will be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity.