
APPROVED BY: TRUST BOARD

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CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

1.Aims

Our Trust 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 and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

This policy has been adopted by St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, to set out the circumstances in which the schools within the Trust will charge for certain activities, and the remissions which are available for those charges.

2.Legislation

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449 to 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.

3.Definitions

- **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable
- **"Parent"** includes any person who is a natural or adopted parent of a student, as well as any person who is not a natural or adopted parent of a student, but who has care of a student, or parental responsibility for a student.

4.Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, and for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Finance Committee.

4.2 Headteachers

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

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently

Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents/carers

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

5. Where charges cannot be made

5.1 Education

Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

School Meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged in accordance with the published charges.

Public Examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may seek to recover the fee incurred from that pupil's parents.

Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

In general, and subject to the exceptions set out below, there is no charge for activities during school hours except for music tuition provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. (see 6.4).

5.2 Transport

There is no charge for transport to any other premises where the school has arranged for pupils to be educated.

5.3 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, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit
- The school will not make any charge for organised sports matches against other schools.
- Note that there is a distinction between the cost of activities being undertaken, and the cost of any board or lodging (see 6.3)

6. Where charges can be made

6.1 Education

In respect of activities that take place during school hours, the school may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep, including 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 (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- music or vocal tuition (see 6.4).

Note that there is a distinction between the cost of activities being undertaken, and the cost of any board or lodging (see 6.3)

Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or off site

There are complicated formulae for calculating whether an activity, trip or residential visit which takes place partly during and partly outside school hours will be deemed to take place during or outside school hours for charging purposes. This will be made clear to parents in any letter regarding an activity.

Travelling time is included in time spent on activity for the purposes of determining whether the activity takes place during school hours.

6.2 Transport

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the LA or STCAT has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

6.3 Residential Visits

Schools will charge for board and lodging on all residential trips.

Where a visit organised by the school incurs a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place.

The school will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential trips, even where the activity is an essential part of the curriculum and mainly takes place during the school day. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (see 8 for more guidance on remissions).

6.4 Music Tuition

The Trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule in specific situations within the legislation.

Charges may be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination syllabus being followed by pupils.

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents where this is delivered by specialist tutors. This will apply to lessons given to an individual pupil or to groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles). The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or prescribed public examination syllabus being followed by the student.

6.5 Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil /parent or member of staff the school may charge those responsible for some / all 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 / all the cost to those responsible.

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

6.6 Optional Extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras include education or activities provided outside of school time that are not:

- part of the National Curriculum
- part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- part of religious education

For example, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, or non-curriculum-related school trips, or examination entry fee(s) where the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) by the school

6.7 The cost of optional extras

The school will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional extras.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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
- 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 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.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be based on parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

7. Voluntary contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

The need for voluntary contributions to support activities will be made clear to parents, especially where an activity is dependent on voluntary contributions for an event to take place. It will be made clear to parents that an activity may be cancelled if there are insufficient voluntary contributions. Where the amount requested in respect of an activity or trip consists of a combination of compulsory charges and voluntary payments, this will be made clear from the outset.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to contribute.

7.1 Inability or unwillingness to make a voluntary contribution

The Trust 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 make a voluntary contribution. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to (or could not) make a voluntary contribution will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

8. Remissions and concessions

There is a statutory remission scheme for compulsory charges made for board and lodging on residential visits which either take place during school hours, or are provided as part of the national curriculum, the syllabus for a prescribed examination, or statutory religious education. Where the remission scheme applies, the school will fund the board and lodging element of these residential visits for eligible students.

Parents will be eligible for statutory remission if they are in receipt of any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit (in prescribed circumstances)

Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

9. Refunds

A refund of a compulsory charge or voluntary payment received will be made only where the following circumstances apply:

- The activity, trip or visit was cancelled due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and/or their parents; or
- The school decides that the student will not take part in an activity, trip or visit for any reason. Where this is because of the student's behaviour, the refund will be reduced by the amount of any costs already incurred by the school.

Where a student/parent has decided to pull out of an activity, trip or visit, the school will be under no obligation to refund any compulsory charge or voluntary payment received.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The CFOO monitors charges and remissions and ensures these comply with this policy.

(This policy will be reviewed by the CFOO every 2 years.)

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Finance Committee.