



ST JAMES' C of E JUNIOR SCHOOL

Charging and Remissions Policy

2024-26

*'With exploring minds, and faith; we grow and learn together'
'Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path' ~ Psalm 119: v105*

Our vision is to ensure children enjoy learning and, with exploring minds, are actively engaged in their studies. At St James' our curriculum will provide them with skills, knowledge and personal characteristics that enable them to make the most of their lives and take the opportunities they encounter. This approach is mirrored by the staff who reflect and adapt in order to develop their practice as the dedicated professionals that they are. In this way we grow and learn together as we follow the St James Way: Be Kind, Be Respectful and to always Give Your All.

From the foundation offered by our infant counterparts, where they: 'teach the children to choose the right path', Proverbs 22:6. Our vision is to follow on that journey. We teach that the Lord's word is a lamp to their feet, a light to such path. ~ Psalm 119: v105. This Christian vision is underpinned by our teaching of the Christian faith and our school values of: Peace, Compassion, Friendship, Forgiveness, Thankfulness and Endurance.

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<p>Please note that the version of this document contained within the Policy Folder on Staff Shared is the only version that is maintained.</p> <p>Any printed copies should therefore be viewed as “uncontrolled” and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.</p>	

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PART A

1. REVISION

This document will be reviewed every two years.

2. DISTRIBUTION

A hard copy of this procedure will be held in the Statutory School Policies & Procedures file, and copies will be controlled and distributed as required. Electronic copies of this procedure shall be available via the computer network.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

The requirements of this procedure are mandatory and apply from the date of approval.

PART B

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that during the school day, all children have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The policy has been informed by the Cumbria Children's Services Directorate advice issued in July 2007 and from updated/revised guidance 'Charging for School Activities', DfE Oct 2014.

2. AIMS

- To make a broad programme of visits and activities accessible to as many students as possible.
- To establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the school budget.
- The policy complements the school's Equality Policy and teaching and learning good practices.

3. THE SCOPE OF THE CHARGING POLICY

The Governors recognise that whatever public funds are made available they will never be sufficient to fund all desirable activities at the required level.

They therefore reserve the right to:

- Charge parents for activities offered as an optional extra wholly or mainly outside hours (the school day is defined as; morning session 8.40am – 12.15pm and afternoon session 1:15 - 3:20pm). For example: Adventure Club held after school at Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project.

➤ **Education**

School **will not** charge for:

- 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, part of religious education or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;

School **can** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- optional extras (as stated); and
- musical instrument and vocal tuition (optional extras).

➤ **Optional Extras**

Charges may be made for some activities known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment and include;

- extended day services (EBASC) and after school activities e.g. after school football club led by external providers, craft and cooking clubs
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not 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; and
- school milk will be charged termly at the current rate unless parents qualify for financial support (see Remissions information)
- from time to time we may invite a non-school based organisation to arrange an

activity during the school day such as theatre groups etc. Such organisations may wish to charge parents. If parents don't want their child to take part, the child can sit out of the activity.

➤ **Music Tuition**

The school purchases the services of music teachers from Cumbria's Music Service. Musical instrument tuition is an optional extra and parents will be charged for all lessons, including those missed in cases where the child is absent due to forgotten their instrument, holiday or short-term illness. School will not charge for lessons missed due to the child being on an educational visit, absence due to long term illness or if the session has been cancelled by the school or the music service. Parents who qualify for financial support (see Remissions information) will not be charged for music tuition and this will be subsidised by Pupil Premium funding.

➤ **Voluntary Contributions**

Schools can ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. The Governing Body or head teacher **must** make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. 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.

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because his/her parents are unable or unwilling to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it may be cancelled and the school must make sure that this is made clear to parents. If a parent is unable or unwilling to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

In cases where a school visit or activity is under-funded by voluntary contributions, the headteacher will consider all relevant factors and make a final decision to either cancel or go ahead with the event.

➤ **Residential Visits**

School **cannot** charge for:

- 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, part of religious education or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost;
- admission fees e.g. cinema, theatre etc.

The school will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the benefits listed in this policy (see Remissions information), will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

➤ **Non-residential visits and activities**

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the lunch break.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening. In cases such as these, parents can request to be told how the charges were calculated.

➤ **Transport**

School **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 education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated e.g. swimming, however, school can ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the costs;
- 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, however school can ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the costs.

Calculating charges

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

Any charge made will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity including the cost of staff (where applicable), and will be divided equally by

the number of pupils participating. It will not 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. Parents must be informed in advance of what is being charged for, how the charges are worked out, who might qualify for help with costs (subsidised or free) and when charges will be made.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge will not include a cost for alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. No charges will 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 necessary for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

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
- non-teaching staff;
- 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 a proportion of the costs) for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

4. DAMAGE TO PROPERTY & BREAKAGES

The school will attempt to recover some or all of the costs incurred repairing wilful damage or breakage of school property, or wilful damage or breakage of property belonging to a third party where school has been charged. The actual amount will be determined by the head teacher.

5 DEBT RECOVERY

The Governing Body authorise the school to take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds and in doing so, it will observe the relevant financial regulations and any other legal requirements.

Staff will follow set school procedures to secure the collection of all debts. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it. Unless a decision to write off a debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action, authorisation is in place to initiate legal or other action to recover debts.

A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years.

See Appendix 1 – Fee Payment & Debt Recovery Procedures

6 REMISSIONS

Parents who would qualify for financial support from the school's allocated Pupil Premium funding are those who are in receipt of;

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support (IS)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit with **NO** Working Tax Credit and the family's annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs), does not exceed **£16,190**
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit.

The Governing Body reserves the right to be more or less generous with the application of its Charging & Remissions Policy, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

No child will be prevented from taking part in an activity simply because his/her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. Remission of charges may be available at the discretion of the headteacher and parents are invited to speak with the headteacher to discuss these matters in confidence. The Headteacher will consider requests and decide on each application on a case by case basis at their discretion. Appeals may be made to the Chair of Governors.

7 ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

The Finance Committee of the Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving regular financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies.

8 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Single copies of the information covered by St James Church of England Junior School Publication Scheme are provided free (see list * below). However, the Governors reserve the right to make a charge:

- For multiple copies of information covered in the Fol Act 2000
- If a request involves a lot of photocopying or printing
- Where cost of postage is high

In these cases the individual will be informed of the likely cost before fulfilling their request.

9 CHARGE FOR USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

A charge will be made for the use of school accommodation (Lettings etc. please see separate Lettings Policy) and for all external word-processing, copy printing, design work, etc. Details are available from the School Business Manager.

Appendix 1

FEE PAYMENT & DEBT RECOVERY PROCEDURES

It is essential that fees are paid on time for the efficient and timely management of income to the school's delegated budget, and minimising administration time and costs.

Payment options

Whilst cash payments can be made, the school prefers to receive online payments via SchoolMoney, which are more easily reconciled against invoices and present fewer security risks than children carrying cash or holding cash on the premises.

- Music Tuition fees are invoiced each half term and should be paid by the date indicated on SchoolMoney.
- EBASC fees are invoiced weekly and should be paid by the date indicated on SchoolMoney.
- Dinner money should be paid in advance; weekly, half termly or termly.
- Educational visits and miscellaneous items (SATs books, Leavers' Hoodies etc) should be paid by the due date indicated on SchoolMoney.

DEBT RECOVERY

Any account falling into arrears will trigger the following procedure;

Invoices (EBASC, Music Tuition)

A payment reminder will be issued requesting the account is brought up to date after 14 days.

After a further 14 days a payment reminder will be produced and sent home with an accompanying letter requesting the account to be paid within 7 days.

At the end of this period (35 days outstanding) a letter/email will be sent advising the removal of access to services from EBASC or Music Tuition and the debt will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and/or Governors, who will make the final decision whether to remove access to services.

Dinner money:

Step 1: A text will be sent if the account has fallen into arrears of £24 (or two weeks dinner money).

Step 2: A text asking for the matter to be dealt with urgently, will be sent after a further 7 days (debt accruing to £36 or three weeks dinner money).

Step 3: Dinner Money Reminder letter 1 will also be sent for balances over £36 stating that the matter is becoming a concern.

Step 4: Dinner Money Reminder letter 2 will be sent for balances over £48 stating that the child will be removed from the Dinner Register and will need a packed lunch for the following week unless payment is received.

Step 5: If payment is still outstanding after a further 7 days –letter 3 will be issued giving a last opportunity to pay off the debt before further action is taken.

Any child leaving the school with accounts in arrears will receive letter 3, giving parents a last opportunity to settle the account.

Once all letters have been sent and all attempts made to contact parents/carers, school reserves the right to pass the debt onto the CC Legal Team / Debt Collection Agency (decision will be made by Governors).

WRITE-OFFS

If, after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover the debt, and the account is not settled, then the Governors must take the decision to continue to pursue or write-off the debt.

Such write-offs shall be formally considered and approved by the Governing Body, and recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned. This should include as a minimum the value of the original debt, details of the debtor, a description of the debt and the period it related to, steps taken to recover the debt, and the date of the governors' meeting where the debt was authorised for write-off.

The amount of any debt written-off will be borne by the school's delegated budget.

Further information can be found in The Financial Regulations for Schools.

Sample Dinner Money Reminder Letter # 1

Dear XXXXXX

Dinner Money Reminder

On checking SchoolMoney today it appears that a total of £xx.xx is owed for xxxxxxx's lunches.

I would be grateful if you could make a payment as soon as possible to bring the account back into credit.

Dinner money should be paid in advance weekly, half termly or termly, preferably by SchoolMoney or alternatively by a cash/cheque payment to school, on a Monday morning.

Thank you.

Mrs H Maiden
School Business Manager

Sample Dinner Money Reminder Letter #2

Dear XXXX

Dinner Money – Second Reminder

On checking SchoolMoney today it appears that a total of £xx.xx is still owed for xxxxxxx's lunches.

The outstanding amount is now beginning to reach a concerning level, and I would be grateful if you could make a payment as soon as possible to bring the account back into credit otherwise your child will need to bring a packed lunch to school.

If you wish your son/daughter to remain on the school dinner register please contact the office as soon as possible.

Please see the enclosed account history for details.

Thank you.

Mrs H Maiden
School Business Manager

Enc.

Sample Dinner Money Reminder Letter #3 (Final)

Dear XXXX

On checking SchoolMoney today I can confirm that a total of £xx.xx is still owed for xxxxxxxx's lunches.

As we have advised you several times recently, the outstanding amount has reached an unacceptable level and I am afraid that it has become necessary to take formal steps to recover this debt.

The Governors will be made aware of the situation at a meeting on where they will be asked to take a decision as to whether to remove your child from the dinner register, and whether to pass on the debt for recovery by Cumberland Council's Legal Team.

I would be happy to speak with you about this issue if you would like to contact me as soon as possible.

Please see the enclosed account history for details.

Thank you.

Mr A Beattie
Headteacher

Enc.