

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

Under the charging provisions of the Education Act 1996, governing boards of maintained schools and academies must draw up a statement of their charging and remissions policy before they may charge for certain defined activities. The policy must also be available online. St Bernard's Catholic Grammar school's policy below can also be found on the school's website.

Education legislation demands that schools, subject to certain exceptions, may not charge for education provided during school hours. However, schools are permitted to charge for other items and experiences provided to the pupils. Schools may also invite voluntary contributions to help support these provisions. Schools have a duty to inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits that support is available towards certain costs when they are being asked to make contributions eg towards school visits.

Objectives and targets

The governing board of St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School has set up this policy for certain activities which take place in the school. The purpose of this policy is to clarify which items and experiences that the school provides may have a levy charged upon them, how much of the cost the school expects parents to be charged and who will be offered support to pay for items and experiences for their children. This charging and remission policy is implemented within the letter of the law, and also embracing the spirit of it. It will be no less generous than the Local Authority's policy.

Action plan

Where visits are arranged either as an integral part of a particular syllabus or to enhance pupils' learning experience, parents may be asked to contribute towards the cost. However, legislation states that a pupil should not be debarred from a visit if a parent does not wish to contribute. In cases of family hardship, parents may apply, in confidence, to the headteacher for exemption from such contributions. However, we hope that parents will realise that there comes a point when a trip is not viable if sufficient contributions are not forthcoming.

There may be occasions when an organisation other than the local authority (LA) or the school governing board arranges an activity during school hours, and parents want their children to take part. Such organisations may charge parents for the services provided, so any parents who do not wish to pay so that their child can attend must seek permission for their child's absence.

We believe that a school should give pupils as many varied learning experiences as possible and we shall do our utmost to ensure that all our pupils have the opportunity to benefit from such experiences. Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits may apply to the school for remission of charges in whole or part towards the charges for activities. To qualify for help. Parents/carers must contact the Headteacher and if requested provide proof of their income or benefit.

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances (the government plans to prescribe these circumstances when universal credit is fully rolled out).

- Income support.
- Income-based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child tax credit, provided that Working tax credit is not also received and the family's income as assessed by HMRC does not exceed certain limits.
- Working tax credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit.
- The guarantee element of state pension credit.
- An income-related employment and support allowance.

For activities such as music tuition, field trips, concert and theatre visits, the table below indicates the school's policy on which activities will be charged for.

Activity	Comment
Individual instrumental music tuition that is over and above the national curriculum, and/or an approved examination syllabus.	A charge will be made per lesson and paid direct to the teacher of that instrument in advance of the lessons. The 'contract' underlying the activity will be between the teacher concerned and the parent. Any examination fees are paid by parents.
Transport to work experience	Parents will pay directly (except statemented pupils where the statement refers to transport).
Activities outside school time not related to statutory duties.	Charges will be levied.
Board and lodging on residential visits.	Parents are to be charged, except in cases of statutory remission where families receive benefits.
Rescrutiny of exam results.	Parents to pay all charges.
Exam entry for prescribed exam for which pupils have not been prepared by school.	Parents to pay all charges.
Entry for an exam which is not on prescribed list where preparation	A charge will be made.

takes place outside school hours.	
Recovery of wasted exam fees.	Parents to be charged.
Educational visits and field trips.	Parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution.
Loss or damage to or breakage of school property	Parents will be charged if caused by negligence or deliberate act. The charge will be the cost of replacement or repair or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.
Wilful damage, neglect or loss of third party property	A charge will be levied where the cost has been recharged to the school.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be monitored and evaluated in the light of changes to legislation and comments received from parents and other interested parties.

Agreed by the Finance Committee: 2nd March 2020

Next school review due: Spring 2022