



St Paul's C of E VA Primary School

Charging, Remissions and Debt Policy

Last Reviewed : September 2023

Next Review: September 2024

<u>L Varney</u>	Headteacher	Date: <u>27.09.23</u>
<u>S Morrill</u>	Chair of governors	Date: <u>27.09.23</u>

Charging, Remissions and Debts Policy

In line with our Christian ethos, we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular 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 is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Voluntary contributions

Voluntary payments will be sought for activities such as day trips, workshops and transport for swimming. The school acknowledges that in some cases, where payments are made on a voluntary basis, there will be some that do not pay. However, payment will be genuinely voluntary and children shall not be excluded because their parents do not pay.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled. Reminder letters may be sent to those parents who have not contributed.

Where an activity is proposed, it shall be offered to a distinct group such as a class or year group not only those showing a willingness to pay.

The Acorn Fund As a voluntary aided school, St. Paul's receives only 90% funding of capital money for its buildings and ICT hardware from central government. The remaining 10% has to be found by the school. The governors therefore request a small voluntary donation from parents of £10 per month towards this shortfall. This fund is administered by the finance governor. No members of the educational staff of the school know which parents pay into the fund.

The Headteacher, staff and governors will ensure that the following applies:

1. No charges will be made for

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books or other equipment)
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum.
- the education part of any trip that takes place during school hours
- education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip, although parents/carers will be invited to make a voluntary contribution

2. Activities for which charges may be made

a) Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However, pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see point 4 below) may not be charged in full for board and lodging costs at the Headteacher's discretion. Costs for non-Curriculum activities will also be charged.

c) Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 1 above).

Charges will be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as "optional extras".

Charges will not exceed the actual predicted cost (per pupil) of provision as the school does not aim to profit from any activity. In the event of a profit being accidentally made, a refund will be offered if the profit is greater than 5% of the overall cost. (See refunds section)

Examples of charges and remissions are given in the table below

Activity or thing which will or may be charged for	Notes	Remitted or help available
Charges may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them	For example, a clay model– a charge to cover the cost of the clay.	None
Charges for lost books- Nominal £5 per book	Library, readers	None
Charges for deliberate damage to school property	Replacement cost of the item	None
Charges will be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils	Hertfordshire LEA operates a remission policy for children entitled to free school meals in relation to individual tuition in playing a musical instrument. Details of the current scheme are available from the Hertfordshire Music Centre.
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Remission for category A (see below)
Photocopying is free for the first 3 single-sided pages, the next 3 single sided pages will be £1 and thereafter 10p per side.		None

3. Activities for which charges will be made

These activities are generally payable to Hertfordshire County Council, however music tuition is payable to the School directly who, in turn, pays Hertfordshire County Council.

- a) Music tuition. Music tuition for individuals or groups of up to four pupils.

Lessons are not compulsory but an optional extra for those families wishing their children to have instrumental or vocal tuition. Remission of fees to those families in receipt of free school meals may be available by applying to the Hertfordshire Music Service.

Lessons are payable termly in advance. Lessons cannot commence if payment has not been received. Notice of termination of lessons needs to be given by half term for the lessons to cease at the end of that term. Unpaid invoices are passed as bad debts to the County Council.

- b) Dinner Money. School dinner money will be requested as and when meals are ordered however we would strongly encourage parents and carers to keep their Arbor account in credit. If no money is received, no dinners are ordered. Parents/carers may only order ad hoc meals if their account is in credit.

Parents who have failed to provide their child with either a packed lunch, or have not paid school dinner money, will be contacted on the first day of term by the School Secretary. The child will be provided with school dinner and parents will be requested to either pay for the half term's school dinners, or provide the child with packed lunches.

The number of children who are entitled to Free School Meals is an important factor that influences school funding and parents are encouraged to take up this entitlement. If parents are entitled to Free School Meals, the school needs confirmation from HCC beforehand.

- c) Milk Money. Milk is not compulsory but if opted for is paid for at the end of each term in advance. If no money is received, no milk is ordered. Children in receipt of free school meals also receive free milk upon request.

4. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances.

Parents in receipt of

- Income Support;
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (with annual earned income of no more than £7,400 after tax and not including any benefits)

Some categories of parents may claim help with some costs in some circumstances. Remission of music tuition fees may be available for families on certain benefits through application to the Hertfordshire Music Service via the free school meals system.

5. Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection. However, this may be necessary where places are limited.

Refunds

- Where a planned trip does not take place, parents will be refunded in full.
- A refund will not normally be given if a child is absent for a trip through illness. However, if a child missed a residential trip due to accident or illness, the parent/carer may claim under the insurance policy.
- Where a parent has reserved a place for their child on a trip and the school has secured this place with the company concerned, payment will not be refunded to the parent unless the school is able to cover its related costs.
- If, for any unforeseen reason, parents have been overcharged, refunds may be required where overall profits exceed 5%. Likewise, if undercharged, it may be necessary to ask parents for either additional payments or voluntary contributions.