CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

RATIONALE

This policy statement considers each type of activity that can be charged for, and explains when charges will be made. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity - for example 'optional extras' - parents will be informed how the charge is worked out and who may qualify for help with financial assistance. Parents have a right to ask for this information

Any charge made for a pupil will not exceed the actual cost of the activity. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund-raising.

EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

No charge will be made for admitting pupils to the school. Education provided during school hours is free. This includes the materials and equipment for routine school activities.

'School hours' are those when the school is actually in session, and does not include the break in the middle of the school day. Parents and others have a right to information about school hours, and this information is included in the school prospectus.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TUITION

Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil or small groups to play a musical instrument, if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Although we cannot charge for school-time activities, we may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions to make school funds go further.

The Governing Body agrees that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently.

If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents this will be explained to them at the planning stage. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible,

and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then the activity will be cancelled. Ideally no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

ACTIVITIES NOT RUN BY THE SCHOOL OR LA

When a non-school organisation arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents wish their children to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents.

Parents must ask the school to agree to the absence. The Head and Governing Body will decide whether the absence is in the pupils' best interest. They will also consider the requirements of the education regulations about absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

Parents will only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or Religious Education requirement. No charge will be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination.

Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged as 'optional extras'. The Governing Body in conjunction with the Headteacher will decide whether to make a charge.

EDUCATION PARTLY DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge will be made. However, the trip would have to be supported by voluntary contributions from parents as school funds would be insufficient to fund frequent out-of-school activities. (Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours.)

RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Certain rules apply for residential activities. A trip counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts to half or more of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. Each school day is normally divided into two sessions and each 24-hour period is divided into two half-days beginning at noon and at midnight.

On this basis, a term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9 pm on Sunday would last for nine half-days, including five school sessions, and would count as taking place in school time. A trip from noon on Thursday to 9 pm on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and would be classified for charging as taking place outside school time. If 50% or more of a half-day is spent on a residential trip, this should be treated as the whole of that half-day being spent on the trip.

For a residential activity taking place mainly during school time, that concerns the National

Curriculum or Religious Education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel. However, charges may be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for those pupils whose parents receive Income Support, Disability

Working Allowance or an income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. Documentation should inform parents of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits.

Examples of activities for which voluntary parental contributions are currently requested:

- Visits to the school by theatre groups
- Visits to the school by topic related speakers
- Day trips to places of curricular interest

Examples of activities for which parental charges are currently requested:

- Music tuition
- End of year school trip

Whenever financially possible the school seeks to fund activities that support learning without asking for parental contributions.

However, the school recognises the value of ‘first hand experience’ for children’s learning and acknowledges that gaining such experience is rarely achieved without some financial cost that requires parental contribution.

The school will not seek to gain profit through requests for parental contribution for activities.

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed every year to ensure that it continues to meet the general principle.

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