



# St Mark's CE Primary School

## Charging

### Policy Statement and Guidelines

Policy Date: Autumn 2016

Review Date: Autumn 2018

## **Policy Statement: Charging**

This policy refers to 'charging' in school and the extended school provision at St Mark's Church of England Primary School.

We acknowledge that the school must meet the statutory requirements laid down in the 1996 Education Act relating to charging for educational activities. We concur with the objectives behind this aspect of the Act which are detailed below.

### **The objectives of the charging provisions in the 1996 Education Act are:**

- a) To maintain the right to free school education.
- b) To establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching times should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- c) To emphasise that there is no statutory requirements to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give the LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- d) To confirm the right of LAs and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, whether during or outside school hours.

### **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to meet the above objectives we have agreed the following statements of principle:

#### **1. General Education**

There will be no charge for the general education provided during normal school hours – unless children have made an item which they wish to keep. Parents will have been notified of the cost in advance.

#### **2. Design and Technology**

No charge will be made for materials for design technology activities. However, when a parent had indicated in advance that they wish to own a finished product, a charge may be levied to cover the cost of the items that could otherwise be reused. In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to the Headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The Headteacher will agree the contribution the parent makes, having due regard to the family's financial situation.

### **3. Educational Visits, Visiting Groups and Individuals**

Parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of a particular activity within the school day such as a visiting theatre group or a school trip. Where an activity cannot take place unless sufficient parents make a voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to the parents at the time of asking for financial support. No child will be excluded from this type of activity because their parents are unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the Headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The Headteacher will agree the contribution the parents make, having due regard to the family's financial situation.

The Headteacher will decide if an activity is financially viable. Where it seems likely that an activity may have to be cancelled, the Headteacher will consult with the Chair of Governors.

### **4. Residential Trips**

In the case of residential trips, charges will be made for board, lodgings and travel. A non-refundable deposit will be required to secure a place on the trip. A deadline date for the payment of the total cost of the trip will be notified to parents. Failure to pay by the deadline date may mean that the child cannot attend the trip.

If a child is unable to attend the trip due to ill health, it may be possible to make a claim from the school's insurers for a refund of the cost of the trip (minus an administrative fee).

We would not seek to exclude any child whose parents are unable to fund the costs of the visit due to genuine financial hardship. In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the Headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The Headteacher will agree the contribution the parents make, having due regard to the family's financial situation. In accordance with the Act, where a parent is in receipt of income support, family credit, disability working allowance or an income-based jobseeker's allowance, the school can remit the charges for board and lodgings or seek financial assistance for the parents from an outside agency.

The Headteacher will decide if a residential visit is financially viable. Where it seems likely that a visit may have to be cancelled, the Headteacher will consult with the Chair of Governors.

### **5. Damage to School Property**

There is no reference to breakages or fines in the Act's charging provisions. In accordance with our behaviour policy, where a child has wilfully damaged school property the Headteacher will decide, after carefully considering the context in which the damage took place, whether parents should be asked to contribute to all or part of the cost of replacing the damaged item.

## **6. Clubs and Activities**

There may be a charge for extra-curricular clubs and activities held outside school hours led by teachers. There will be a charge for extra-curricular clubs and activities run by outside agencies. There may also be a charge for any resources required by the club e.g. sewing or art materials. Parents will always be advised of the costs involved when their permission is sought for the child to participate.

### **Extended School**

There is a set charging policy for Breakfast Club and Stay & Play. See extended school policy for details.

### **Value for Money**

We believe that we should always seek to maximise the value for money we obtain from any activity. We are committed to keeping costs as low as possible whilst maximising the educational or social benefit of any of the above activities. This statement should be borne in mind by any member of staff seeking financial contributions from the parents.

### **Informing Parents of this Policy**

This policy will be mentioned in the School Prospectus. Parents will be informed that the policy is available on the school's website and that hard copies are available from the school office (for a small charge).

### **Monitoring this Policy**

The Headteacher/Head of Operations will monitor all letters which go out seeking financial contributions to ensure they meet the statements of principle set out in this policy. If a parent/carer communicates that they have financial difficulty, they will be invited to speak with the Senior Leadership Team.

The policy will be reviewed every year by the Governing Body. When reviewing the policy, the Headteacher will report to Governors on how the policy has been operating and whether it has been successful. In particular, the Headteacher will report on the numbers of parents seeking remissions of charges due to financial hardship, the percentage of parents who are unwilling or unable to make voluntary contributions, whether children are being disadvantaged because their parents are unwilling or unable to make financial contributions and whether activities are being unduly affected because of financial considerations.