

Introduction

The school's charging and remissions policy determined by the Governors under section 457 Education Act (1996) introduced new provisions on charging and remissions for school activities. The purposes of the provisions are:

- To maintain the right to a free school education;
- To ensure that activities offered as part of the National Curriculum and wholly within school time will be available to all pupils, regardless of their parent's ability or willingness to help meet the cost;
- To give Local Education Authorities and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours;
- To confirm that schools may invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity organised by the school, either inside or outside school hours.

Education provided by St Thomas' School is free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours (school hours being those hours when a school is in session and not including break or the middle part of the day). However, the school reserves the right to seek voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any school activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential.

Voluntary Contributions

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it will include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which may require voluntary contributions from parents. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre/cinema;
- musical events.

Strategies

1. No charge will be made for admitting pupils to school.
2. Transport or admission costs for swimming lessons during school hours will be met by the school.

3. The school may request voluntary contributions towards the cost of some activities planned during school hours.
4. Where parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an activity which takes place during school hours, or to school equipment or school funds, the contribution will be genuinely voluntary. Pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. If Parents/Carers are having difficulty in funding a trip/activity they are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher and each case will be look at on an individual basis.
5. When there are insufficient voluntary contributions to make an activity possible, and when there is no way to make up the shortfall, it will be cancelled.
6. Where music tuition or singing tuition is not an essential part of the national curriculum, charges may be made.

Outcomes

The funding of activities will be a clear and open process understood by all. We intend that our charging and remissions policy will be in line with that of the LA and that it will meet the requirements of the law.