



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

Charging & Remissions Policy



St. Mary's Catholic First School

Date	Sept 2024
Date to be reviewed	Sept 2025
Acting Head Teacher	Sarah Oakes
Chair of Governors	Nicola Vaughan

Education

The Local Governing Committee cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any Trust school;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum*, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re- sit(s) at the school.**

Schools and local authorities can charge for:

- any material, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4)

**It should be noted that 'part of the National Curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the national Curriculum 'inclusion statement' (e.g. developing teamwork skills).*

***However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents.*

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

Optional extras are;

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a. Part of the National Curriculum;
 - b. Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c. Part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;

- transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local governing committee have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions). In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to;
 - any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
 - the cost of buildings and accommodation;
 - non-teaching staff;
 - teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
 - the cost or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore, in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school local governing committee from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or headteacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The local governing committee or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition. Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or the first access to the Key Stage Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Residential Visits

The school cannot charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools will support charges by:

- Not charging a cost for board and lodgings that exceeds the actual cost.

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits may be supported with the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- 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)
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- Universal credit – if you apply on or after 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Transport

Schools cannot charge for;

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local Trust has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Local Governing Committee or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place inside or outside school hours. However, a charge will only be made for the activity outside of school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum and not part of religious education.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visits is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight any day.

Mitigating Financial Pressures

The school and Local Governing Committee look to mitigate the financial pressures for parents and carers by:

- Requesting voluntary contributions for trips and educational experiences;
- Provide adequate advanced warning and manageable timetable to allow parents and carers to pay in instalments for educational activities;
- Timetable events in school to try and avoid parents paying for multiple trips at the same time;
- Encouraging those who are struggling to pay to seek advice and support from school when advertising and organising educational activities that incur a monetary cost.