



St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School
& Byron Sixth Form College



Charging & Remissions Policy

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Responsible: C Dent
Finance Committee Governors

St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School & Byron Sixth Form College

Charging and Remissions Policy

Main points

The school, subject to the limited exceptions referred to below, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).

The school will ensure that parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 3 of this document are informed of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

School Charging

The school **cannot** charge for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided 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;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition provided is at the request of the pupil's parent;

The school **can** charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4);
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Trips that are not part of the school curriculum eg foreign skiing trip

Public Examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the student fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that student's parents. This includes resits.

School Meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals. Further information about free school meal entitlement is available from the school website.

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 authority/governing body 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;
- Support 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 an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, 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 pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this will be made clear to parents at the outset. It must also be made 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 the parent cannot afford to pay, or is unwilling 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 (this will be made 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. It should be made clear to parents at the outset what the policy for allocating places on a school visit will be. When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. The school will not send colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

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.

Charges may 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.

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Transport

The school **cannot** charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body 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;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

The school **can** charge for:

- Board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

Remission of Charges

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, it will be made clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging, music tuition and transport to out of school activities that are part of the school curriculum:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 2013/14);
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

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 either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school 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 school 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 visit 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 on any day.

This policy has been compiled in accordance with the DfE Guidance on charging for school activities.