

# Charging for School Activities, Voluntary Contributions and Remissions Policy

Hartford Church of England High School



**Approved by:** Finance & Resources Committee

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Last reviewed on:** 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Next review due by:** Autumn Term 2023

## **HARTFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL**

### **POLICY FOR CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS & REMISSIONS**

#### **Context**

The Governing Body are aware that under the Education Reform Act 1988 that no charge can be made for education in school hours and that every child has the right to receive free school education. Also, we believe this policy complies with the Education Act 2002.

We recognise that all activities offered during normal teaching time must be made available to all children regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

We recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, educational visits and residential experiences, can make towards pupils personal and social education.

It is our intention to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional activities.

Therefore, any activity which takes place mainly during school hours or is an essential part of the curriculum will be provided free of charge.

We are aware that we are able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents when organising educational visits which will enrich the curriculum and the educational experiences of children.

#### **Aim**

- To outline what the school can and cannot charge for.
- To outline the school policy for voluntary contributions and remissions.

#### **Conditions when charges cannot be made**

Charges cannot be made for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- within school hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out-of-school hours;
- part of a syllabus for an agreed examination for a pupil;
- for statutory religious education;
- for musical tuition as part of the National Curriculum;
- for education provided on any educational visit during the school day;
- for education provided on any educational visit outside school hours;
- for the cost of supply teachers substituting for absent teachers on residential visits with pupils;
- for the entry to public examination which is on the prescribed list;
- examination re-sits

Charges for transport cannot be made when:

- transporting pupils to or from the school premises;

- transporting pupils to other premises where arrangements have been made for them to be educated;
- a pupil needs to sit an examination;
- an educational visit has been planned

### **Conditions when charges can be made**

Charges can be made when:

- a parent/carer wishes their child to own any specific materials, books, instruments or equipment;
- a pupil fails to meet any examination requirement of a syllabus;
- the school has not prepared a pupil for an examination;
- property or equipment has been damaged as a result of a pupil's behaviour

### **Charging for Optional Extras**

Charges may be levied for:

- optional extra activities if parents are willing to accept a charge for the costs;
- an activity that takes place outside school hours;
- any activity provided they do not exceed the actual cost of the activity;
- any materials, books, instruments, equipment or tuition fees for providing education that is not part of the National Curriculum or of a syllabus of a prescribed examination or part of religious education;
- the cost of board and lodging on a residential visit;
- transport provided for any activity;
- musical tuition that is not part of the National Curriculum.

### **Support for Parents / Carers**

The Governing Body will:

- endeavour to support any parent/carer in paying for any activity for an individual pupil if they are experiencing financial difficulties. Eg. By agreeing to payment by installments;
- inform parents/carers that if they can prove they are on state benefits (as listed in Appendix1) then they will not be charged board and lodging fees for any residential visit;
- make funds available from various sources, including Pupil Premium, School Funds and Charitable Donations, to support parent/carers who are unable to pay voluntary contributions.

### **Voluntary Contributions**

We are aware that we can ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers that will benefit the school or any school activity.

We will inform parent/carers:

- if planned activities depend on voluntary contributions for part or all of the cost;
- that there is no obligation on them to make voluntary contributions;

- that an educational visit or activity will be cancelled if sufficient costs are not raised via voluntary contributions;
- that no pupil will be excluded from an educational visit or activity if a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay;
- that funds are available from various sources, including Pupil Premium, School Funds and Charitable Donations assist those parents who are unable to pay voluntary contributions

### **Surplus Balances Generated by Voluntary Contributions.**

- Whilst each activity is expected to break even financially, if a small surplus is generated this will be regarded as a donation to school funds.
- Larger surplus balances will be refunded to the parents of pupils who took part in the activity. The decision as to whether to make refunds to parents in respect of a particular activity is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

### **Remission of Charges**

We will remit any charge wholly or partly if any activity takes place:

- mostly within school hours or;
- partly within and partly outside school hours

Where charges are remitted in appropriate circumstances, the costs are borne from the school budget or other funds available to the school (eg Pupil Premium, School Funds and Charitable Donations).

### **Specific Schemes**

#### Residential Activities

A charge for 'Board and Lodging' is made for all residential activities. This charge is remitted for parents in receipt of benefit support payments recognised by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DfE) (see Appendix 1). Residential activities that take place wholly or mainly outside school hours will be organised as 'Optional Extras' and a charge is made for costs incurred. This charge is remitted to parents in receipt of Income Support and other benefits recognised by the DfE, where the activities form part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or are required to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education.

#### Public Examinations

No charge is made for entry fees for prescribed public examinations for which registered pupils have been prepared at school. A charge is made in the following circumstances:

- Examinations on the set list for which the pupil was not prepared at school
- Examinations not on the set list, but the school arranges for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination for which the school is liable to pay the entry fee
- A parent requests that a result in a public examination is challenged

### Instrumental and Vocal Tuition

A charge is made for instrumental & vocal music tuition taking place individually or in groups of up to four pupils. 50% remission is agreed for pupils in receipt of free school meals. Under DfE regulations, 100% remission applies to tuition taking place during the school day for children looked after by the local authority.

### Damage or Breakage

Where, as a result of a pupil's unsatisfactory behaviour, damage to school equipment, materials or property occurs, a charge is levied to enable the damage or breakage to be made good.

### School Minibus

As the School does not have a permit under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985, no charges can be made for travel in the school minibus. Where the minibus is used as part of an activity for which a voluntary contribution has been requested (see above), part of the voluntary contribution may be towards the travel costs.

The School may loan the minibus to other educational establishments and similar 'not for profit' organisations. At the discretion of the Headteacher a voluntary contribution may be requested in such circumstances. In any event, the group concerned would be required to indemnify the School for any loss or damage to the vehicle (including any insurance policy excess) occurring whilst the vehicle is in their control.

### Charges for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

The school will not charge for the inspection of records allowed under the Freedom of Information Act. However where a request is made for a hard copy of the information to be provided, a charge of ten pence per A4 sheet will be made to cover photocopying costs; this will be waived if the total cost would be under £5. If applicable, postage will be charged at standard Royal Mail rates. Under the provisions of the Act no charge can be made for staff time up to 18 hours required to assemble information requested. However if it is likely that it will take more than 18 hours then the school will make a charge at the statutory rate of £25 per hour for the **whole** time required. This will be chargeable in advance.

## **Policy Approval and Review**

This policy is based on DfE guidance issued in May 2018 AND was reviewed and was approved by the Governors' Finance and Resources Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Next review due Autumn term 2023.

## APPENDIX 1

### **BENEFIT SUPPORT PAYMENTS RECOGNISED BY THE DfE FOR REMISSION OF RESIDENTIAL CHARGES:-**

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances; If you apply after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400/annum (after tax and not including any benefits you receive)
- 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
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008;
- Working tax credit run on-paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for working tax credit.

To request assistance, parents should contact the School Finance Manager via the switchboard (01606 786000) or by e-mail : [mail@hartfordhigh.co.uk](mailto:mail@hartfordhigh.co.uk)