



**Charging and Remissions Policy 2024**

*Ratified by Finance and Staffing Committee Summer 2024*

*Date of next review – Summer 2028*

**Contents:**

1. Statement of Intent
2. Legal Framework
3. Aim of policy
4. Scope of policy
5. 'Optional extra' Activities
6. Voluntary Contributions
7. Music Tuition
8. School Transport
9. Residential Visits
10. Deadlines for School Trips
11. Refunds
12. Education partly during School Hours
13. VAT and School Journeys
14. Charging in Kind
15. Breakages and Fines
16. Remission of Charges



## **1. Statement of Intent**

Thorpe Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

The school will:

- Never charge for education provided during school hours.
- Inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions towards the costs of school visits.

Please note that while this policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

## **2. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'

## **3. Aim of Policy**

The aim of this policy is to enable the school to make charges and remissions to parents and to meet our statutory duty. Schools are only permitted to make charges if they have a Charging & Remissions Policy.

Thorpe Church of England Primary School values each pupil as an individual and enables them to achieve their full potential through a wide variety of opportunities and experiences. The governors wish to ensure that all pupils have access to all areas of the life of the school, regardless of parents' ability to pay.

Some activities organised by the school during school hours may require payment. Parents are asked to make voluntary contributions to cover the cost of these activities. No child is excluded from taking part in these activities because of non-payment of the contribution. However, it is often necessary for a substantial number of parents to contribute before the activity can go ahead and if insufficient contributions are received an activity may have to be cancelled.

The senior leadership team and governors will consider sympathetically cases of genuine financial need and remit charges, where appropriate. Thorpe Church of England Primary School is required through its funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities. The governors have adopted a policy in line with the charging and remissions guidance provided by the Department of Education.



#### **4. Scope of Policy**

The policy details each type of activity that can be charged for and explains how and when these charges will be made. In addition, the policy covers the circumstances in which the school will remit charges, wholly or partly, for any activities for which there would normally be a charge.

The items that schools may charge for are:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them
- Music and vocal tuition
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Optional extras

#### **5. 'Optional extra' Activities**

Charges can be made for some activities known as 'optional extras' including the cost for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. Optional Extras are defined as:

- Education provided outside school time that is not part of the National Curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school or part of religious education
- Examination entry fees if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination 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)

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.

If a charge is made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

Any charges made should not exceed the actual cost of the optional extra equally divided by the number of pupils participating. The cost should not subsidise the cost of pupils whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge

#### **6. Voluntary Contributions**

The school governing body or the LA are able to ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities, however:

- It must be made clear at the outset if an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions and may be cancelled if there is insufficient support
- It must be made clear to parents that the contribution is voluntary
- Children will not be treated differently if the parents are unable or unwilling to pay. All children must be given an equal chance to take part
- The school's policy for allocating places must be made clear to parents at the outset



- The school will not send direct debit or standing order mandates when requesting voluntary contributions
- The school may send reminders for voluntary contributions

Once a voluntary contribution has been made towards an activity it is not normally possible to return that contribution once it has been received. Examples include, but are not limited to: if a pupil is ill on the day of a trip; or a non-returnable deposit has already been paid over to a provider and the pupil no longer wishes to go on the trip.

## **7. Music Tuition**

The main exception to the principle of free education, which the law allows, is that a charge may be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours.

The new charging regulations came into force on 1 September 2007 and now charges can be made for individuals and groups of two or more for instrumental and vocal tuition, which takes place during the school day if the parent/carer has requested the tuition. The regulations do not cover lessons which take place outside school hours, at weekends or during the school holidays. These would normally be treated as optional extras.

Instrumental and vocal tuition which is an essential part of the National curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme cannot be charged for.

### **Music Tuition - Children in Care**

Children in care (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989) who wish to have specialist vocal or instrumental tuition during school hours are entitled to free tuition. This includes any incidental costs related to specialist music tuition during the school day.

The exemption from charging does not apply to lessons that take place before or after school, at lunchtime, at weekends or during holidays. However schools receive additional funding for children in care and this should not be used to pay for tuition which takes place during the school day but could be used to cover the cost of music tuition which takes place outside the school day and during the holidays.

Continuity of provision is crucial and children who move in and out of care should be considered as 'in care' so that provision is sustained and meaningful.

## **8. School Transport**

The school cannot charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local 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

However, if a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the LA or school to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided by the LA or the school, then parents may be asked to meet the cost of such travel. An example of this would be travel direct from home to work experience and vice versa.



## **9. Residential Visits**

Residential visits are activities that are funded by voluntary contributions and will not take place if insufficient contributions are received. The school will not charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education 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 by the school or part of religious education
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

By law, schools can charge for:

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

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board & lodging:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- 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)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if applied after or on 1 April 2018, household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)

If the trip is deemed to be outside school hours and is optional the cost of providing the activity can be divided between the number of pupils taking part but must not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to take part in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

## **10. Deadlines for School Trips**

The school will set out timelines for parents to request places and for paying deposits and other monies in the letters inviting the children to participate. Where places are limited they will be allocated on a first come first served basis without exception and deadlines for application and payments will be strictly adhered to.

## **11. Refunds**

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded.

In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.



Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school will have the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it will be at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they will be able to do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

## **12. Education partly during school hours**

There is a prescribed basis for determining whether an activity takes place either inside or outside school hours.

If 50% or more of activity/visit falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours. If less than 50% of time spent on an activity/visit falls during school hours it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. Details and examples of the calculations can be found in the DfE Guidance and are not repeated here.

## **13. VAT and School Journeys**

Any school trips that the school organises for the benefit of its pupils are for a broadly educational reason, regardless of the precise nature of the activity, and further the aims of the wider curriculum of the school. The school can therefore treat them as part of its non-business provision of education and recover any VAT charged.

## **14. Charging in Kind**

The cost of ingredients, materials, equipment etc. needed for practical subjects such as craft or food technology, will be budgeted for and borne by the school. However, where possible parents who are willing to contribute in cash or kind will be encouraged to do this on a voluntary basis.

## **15. Breakages and Fines**

The school may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents. Examples include, but are not limited to: replacing a broken window; replacing a defaced, damaged or lost textbook; and making good any acts of vandalism. Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The school will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances, e.g. financial hardship.

## **16. Remission of charges**

Thorpe Church of England Primary School will inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the relevant benefits that they may be entitled to full or partial remission of charges when parents are asked for



contributions towards the cost of school visits. The relevant benefits are aligned with the Free School Meals (FSMs) criteria as detailed below:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- 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)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if applied after or on 1 April 2018, household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)

Thorpe Church of England Primary School will make budgetary provision for any potential shortfall in contributions to school activities or visits from the deprivation funding within the school's budget share, and within Pupil Premium funds. In addition, voluntary donations or unrestricted funds may be used to help with the cost.

To request assistance parents and/or carers should contact Mrs Southgate, the Headteacher, via [Head@thorpe.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:Head@thorpe.surrey.sch.uk)