

CHARGING POLICY

Approved by Full Governing Body and Trustees 12th December 2023

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Catholic High School, Chester 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 under Sections 449-462 of the Education Act (1996) which sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools in England.

This policy accurately reflects the terms of the act, complying with the requirements and defines the limitations under which charges and remissions may and may not be levied. The Catholic High School, Chester is strongly committed to the idea of free education for all and will always do its best to keep any charges to a minimum.

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

INTRODUCTION

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England.

This policy accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, complies with that requirement and defines the limitations under which charges and remissions may and may not be levied. The Catholic High School, Chester is strongly committed to the idea of free education for all and will always do its best to keep any charges to a minimum.

The Catholic High School will inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed on page 4 of this policy of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

2. GUIDELINES ON CHARGES - Education

2.1 The Governing Body will NOT charge for the following:

- an admission application to the Catholic High School.
- 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 Curriculum¹, 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;¹.
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as 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.
- 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 school².

¹ 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).

² 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.

The Catholic High School **will** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes them to own them.
- optional extras (see below).
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- The use of facilities and other commercial activities
- Provision of Information within the scope of freedom of information

The school will make it clear that in the following circumstances, it will propose to remit (wholly or partly) and charge which would otherwise be payable to the school:

- Overtime worked by the lettings/site team to cover lettings and other commercial activities.
- Photocopying charges for personal use at the current cost for A3 and A4 use.

Optional Extras

Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **will** 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.
- transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the trust board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school:
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit

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;
- 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.

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. A subsidy will not be charged for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit..

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

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

Examination fees and resits

The school may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the set list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A-levels), but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the set list, but the school arranged for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing board or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the school will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the school, resits must be taken at the school.

If a pupil or their parent consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved will be covered by the pupil or their parent. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent or pupil will have their fees refunded.

Voluntary Contributions

The governing body will make it clear to parents from the outset if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions. The governing body will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

No child will 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, it will be cancelled and 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.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents will be advised contributions are voluntary and **not compulsory**.

Music Tuition

- Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.
- Under provision of the Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 charges will be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing.

- Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s).

Residential visits

The Catholic High School will not 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.

The Catholic High School **will** charge for:

- board and lodging – although the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

When The Catholic High 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:

- 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 State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

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 will 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.

Transport

The Catholic High School **will not** 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 education 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; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Damaged or lost items

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. 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.

Remissions

The school will set aside a fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding will be limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- 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 State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

To request assistance, parents should contact the Trip Leader via the school number 01244 952788 or their email address

School trip 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 consider 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 a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen 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.

If 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.

Income generation

In line with the ESFA's '[Academy trust handbook](#)', the trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme will set out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least **annually** by the governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **December 2024**

