The Catholic High School Chester

Charging Policy

Approved By	Full Governing Board
Category	Finance
Policy Owner	A. Kilcoyne
Date Approved	14/7/26
Next Review Date	July 2027

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 The Catholic High School is committed to providing a broad and enriching educational experience for all pupils whilst complying with the statutory requirements relating to charging for school activities.

1.2 The school recognises that educational visits, enrichment activities and additional opportunities play an important role in pupils' personal development and will seek to make these opportunities accessible wherever reasonably practicable.

1.3 The school will only make charges where permitted by legislation and statutory guidance and will ensure that all charges are fair, transparent and communicated clearly to parents and carers in advance.

1.4 Where financial hardship may prevent a pupil from participating in an activity, the school may, at its discretion and subject to available funding, provide financial assistance or subsidise costs. Any assistance will be considered on an individual basis and will be treated confidentially.

1.5 The school is committed to:

- Complying with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance relating to charging and remissions.
- Ensuring that no pupil is unfairly disadvantaged because of financial circumstances where support can reasonably be provided.
- Applying charges fairly, consistently and transparently.
- Communicating any charges or voluntary contributions clearly before activities take place.
- Considering requests for financial assistance on a case-by-case basis.
- Reviewing this policy regularly to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and reflects the school's practice.

2. Legal Framework

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

- Education Act 1996 (Sections 449–462)
- The Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999
- Department for Education (DfE) – *Charging for School Activities* (most recent guidance)
- Academy Trust Handbook (where applicable)

2.2 The Governing Board has adopted this policy to ensure that charges and remissions are applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with current legislation.

2.3 The school will only make charges where permitted by legislation and will consider requests for financial assistance in accordance with the remissions arrangements set out in this policy.

3. Principles of Charging and Remissions

3.1 The school recognises that education provided during school hours should generally be free of charge and will only make charges where permitted by legislation.

3.2 Charges will only be made where they are lawful, reasonable and communicated clearly to parents and carers in advance of the activity or service being provided.

3.3 Where charges apply, they will normally reflect the actual cost of providing the activity, service or resource and will not be used to generate a profit, unless the activity is a commercial letting or income-generating activity undertaken in accordance with the school's financial arrangements.

3.4 The school may request voluntary contributions towards the cost of activities for which charges cannot legally be made. Parents and carers are under no obligation to contribute, and a pupil will not be excluded solely because a voluntary contribution has not been made.

3.5 Where an activity is an optional extra for which charges are permitted, participation will be subject to payment of the relevant charge.

3.6 The school recognises that some families may experience financial hardship and will consider requests for financial assistance or subsidised costs in accordance with the remissions arrangements set out in this policy. Assistance is discretionary and will be considered on an individual basis.

4. Charges

4.1 The school will not charge for:

- Admission to the school.
- Education provided during normal school hours, including materials, books, equipment and tuition where required as part of the National Curriculum.
- Education provided outside school hours where it forms part of the National Curriculum, a prescribed public examination syllabus or religious education.
- Entry to a prescribed public examination where the pupil has been prepared for that examination by the school.
- Transport provided in connection with educational provision where the school has a statutory duty to provide it.

4.2 The school may make charges, where permitted by legislation, for:

- Optional extras provided wholly or mainly outside normal school hours.
- Board and lodging on residential educational visits.

- Individual or small-group instrumental and vocal tuition that is not part of the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination syllabus.
- Examination fees where permitted by legislation.
- Examination resit fees, except where the school agrees to waive the charge in exceptional circumstances.
- Materials, books, instruments or equipment where parents or carers wish their child to own them.
- Replacement bus passes or transport passes.
- Replacement of lost or damaged school property where the loss or damage is the result of wilful or negligent behaviour.
- Lettings, commercial activities and other chargeable services provided by the school.
- The provision of information where a charge is permitted under Freedom of Information legislation.

4.3 Where charges are made, parents and carers will be informed in advance of:

- The activity or service being provided.
- The amount payable.
- What the charge covers.
- The payment arrangements.
- Any circumstances in which financial assistance may be available.

4.4 No charge made under this policy will exceed the actual cost of providing the activity or service, except where the activity forms part of the school's commercial income generation in accordance with its financial arrangements.

5. Optional Extras

5.1 The school may charge for optional extras where charging is permitted by legislation.

5.2 Optional extras include activities that take place wholly or mainly outside normal school hours and are not:

- Part of the National Curriculum;
- Part of a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is being prepared by the school; or
- Part of religious education.

5.3 Charges for optional extras may include the cost of:

- Teaching and support staff engaged specifically to provide the activity.
- Materials, equipment and resources.
- Travel and transport.
- Entrance fees and accommodation.
- Administration and other costs directly associated with providing the activity.

5.4 The charge for an optional extra will not normally exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided by the number of pupils participating.

5.5 Participation in an optional extra is entirely voluntary and is subject to parental agreement and payment of any applicable charge.

5.6 Where insufficient numbers of pupils participate, or insufficient funding is available, the school reserves the right to cancel the activity.

6. Voluntary Contributions

6.1 Where the law does not permit the school to make a charge, the school may invite parents and carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an activity or visit.

6.2 Voluntary contributions are entirely optional. There is no obligation for parents or carers to contribute, and no pupil will be treated differently because a voluntary contribution has not been made.

6.3 Where an activity is funded through voluntary contributions, parents and carers will be informed in advance if the activity can only proceed where sufficient contributions are received. If insufficient funding is available, the school reserves the right to cancel the activity.

6.4 The school will ensure that requests for voluntary contributions make it clear that:

- The contribution is voluntary.
- There is no obligation to contribute.
- The requested contribution will be used solely to support the cost of the activity.

6.5 This section applies only to activities for which voluntary contributions may legally be requested. It does not apply to optional extras or other activities where charges are permitted under this policy.

7. Remissions (Financial Assistance)

7.1 The school recognises that some families may experience financial hardship and is committed to ensuring that pupils are not unfairly disadvantaged where support can reasonably be provided.

7.2 Financial assistance towards the cost of educational visits, activities or other chargeable items may be available at the discretion of the school. Any support provided will be subject to the availability of funding and will be considered on an individual basis.

7.3 Support may include:

- A contribution towards the cost of an activity or visit.
- A reduction in the amount payable.
- In exceptional circumstances, payment of the full cost of an activity or visit.

7.4 When considering requests for financial assistance, the school may take into account factors including:

- Financial hardship.
- The educational value of the activity.
- The availability of school funding.
- Any other relevant individual circumstances.

7.5 Requests for financial assistance should be made in confidence to the activity organiser or School Business Manager. All requests will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

7.6 The decision of the school regarding the level of financial assistance provided will be final.

8. Examination Fees and Resits

8.1 The school will meet the cost of entry for prescribed public examinations where pupils have been prepared for the examination by the school and meet the examination board's entry requirements.

8.2 The school may charge examination fees where permitted by legislation, including where:

- A pupil has not been prepared for the examination by the school.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of a public examination for which the school has paid the entry fee.
- An examination entry is made outside the school's normal examination programme at the request of a pupil or parent/carer.

8.3 Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at a public examination (a resit), the cost of the examination entry will normally be met by the pupil or their parent/carer.

8.4 The school may, in exceptional circumstances, waive or subsidise examination resit fees where it considers this to be in the best educational interests of the pupil. Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher or an authorised senior leader.

8.5 Where a pupil or parent/carer requests that an examination paper is reviewed, remarked or appealed, any associated fees will normally be payable by the pupil or parent/carer.

8.6 Where an awarding body changes the overall grade following a review of marking or appeal and refunds the fee to the school, that refund will be passed on to the person who paid the original charge.

9. Music Tuition

9.1 The school may charge for individual or small-group instrumental and vocal tuition where the tuition is not:

- Part of the National Curriculum.
- Required as part of a prescribed public examination syllabus.
- Provided as part of religious education.

9.2 Any charges for music tuition will be communicated to parents and carers in advance and will reflect the cost of providing the tuition.

9.3 Participation in chargeable music tuition is voluntary and subject to parental agreement and payment of the applicable fee.

9.4 Where appropriate and subject to available funding, the school may consider requests for financial assistance towards the cost of music tuition in accordance with the remissions arrangements set out in this policy.

10. Educational Visits and Residential Visits

10.1 Educational visits and residential visits form an important part of the school's curriculum and wider enrichment programme. The school is committed to providing a broad range of educational opportunities while ensuring that charges are applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with current legislation.

10.2 Educational visits may be provided as:

- Curriculum activities that support the delivery of the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination syllabus; or
- Optional enrichment activities that enhance pupils' educational experiences beyond the statutory curriculum.

10.3 Any charges or requests for voluntary contributions will be made in accordance with the principles set out in this policy and current legislation.

10.4 Where an educational visit is offered as an optional activity, participation will be voluntary and subject to payment of the applicable charge.

10.5 The school will provide parents and carers with clear information before any educational visit, including:

- The purpose and educational value of the visit.

- Any applicable charges or requests for voluntary contributions.
- Payment arrangements and deadlines.
- Information regarding financial assistance, where appropriate.

10.6 The school may subsidise the cost of educational visits and residential visits where funding is available. In exceptional circumstances, the school may meet the full cost of a visit where it considers this appropriate and in the best educational interests of the pupil.

10.7 Parents and carers experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the trip organiser or School Business Manager in confidence to discuss any financial assistance that may be available.

10.8 The school reserves the right to cancel or amend an educational visit where there are insufficient numbers to make the visit viable, insufficient funding, or where circumstances beyond the school's control prevent the visit from taking place.

11. Transport

11.1 The school will not charge for transport where it is required to fulfil its statutory duties or where transport is provided as part of the delivery of the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination.

11.2 The school may make charges for transport where permitted by legislation, including:

- Transport provided as part of an optional educational visit or activity.
- Replacement school or public transport passes.
- Other transport services provided by the school that fall outside its statutory responsibilities.

11.3 Parents and carers will be informed in advance of any transport charges and the payment arrangements that apply.

11.4 Where appropriate, transport costs may be included within the overall charge for an educational visit or activity.

12. Damaged or Lost Property

12.1 The school expects all pupils to take reasonable care of school property, equipment, books, resources and facilities.

12.2 Where school property is lost, damaged or destroyed as a result of deliberate acts, negligence or misuse by a pupil, the school reserves the right to recover the reasonable cost of repair or replacement from the pupil's parent or carer.

12.3 Where appropriate, the school may invoice parents or carers for the cost of replacing or repairing damaged or lost items. Any charge will not exceed the reasonable cost incurred by the school.

12.4 The school will consider the circumstances of each case before applying a charge and may waive or reduce the amount payable in exceptional circumstances.

13. Refunds

13.1 The school recognises that circumstances may arise which result in an educational visit or activity being cancelled or a pupil being unable to attend. Refund requests will be considered fairly, consistently and on a case-by-case basis.

13.2 Any deposits paid towards educational visits or activities are normally non-refundable, unless:

- The school cancels the visit.
- The visit cannot proceed due to circumstances beyond the control of the pupil or parent/carer and the school is able to recover the costs.
- The Headteacher determines that exceptional circumstances apply.

13.3 Where the school cancels an educational visit or activity, parents and carers will normally receive a full refund of any payments made, unless costs have already been irrecoverably incurred by the school.

13.4 Where a pupil or parent/carer cancels a place on an educational visit or activity, any refund will depend on:

- Whether the school is able to recover the costs from the provider.
- Whether the place can be filled by another pupil.
- The timing of the cancellation.
- Any non-refundable costs already incurred by the school.

13.5 Where a pupil is unable to attend due to illness or other exceptional circumstances, the school will consider each request individually. Any refund will be subject to the school's ability to recover costs from the provider or insurer.

13.6 Where an educational visit is postponed rather than cancelled, the school will determine whether payments will:

- Be transferred to the revised visit;
- Be transferred to an alternative activity; or
- Be refunded where appropriate.

Parents and carers will be informed of the arrangements as soon as reasonably practicable.

13.7 The school reserves the right to retain any costs that have already been committed or cannot be recovered from third-party providers.

13.8 Any refund due will normally be made using the original method of payment.

14. Income Generation

14.1 The school may generate income through the hire of its facilities, the provision of services and other activities that support the school's educational objectives.

14.2 Charges for lettings, commercial activities and other chargeable services will be determined in accordance with the school's financial procedures and any applicable legislation.

14.3 Where appropriate, charges will reflect the full cost of providing the service and may include an appropriate contribution towards overheads and administration.

14.4 The school may charge for the provision of information where permitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated regulations.

14.5 Any income generated will be used to support the educational provision, maintenance and development of the school.

15. Monitoring and Review

15.1 The Headteacher and Governing Board will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy to ensure that it remains fair, transparent and compliant with current legislation and statutory guidance.

15.2 The school will review charging arrangements periodically to ensure that:

- Charges are applied consistently and fairly.
- Financial assistance is administered appropriately.
- Parents and carers receive clear information regarding charges and remissions.
- The policy continues to reflect the school's practice and statutory requirements.

15.3 The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Review of educational visit and activity charges.
- Monitoring requests for financial assistance and remissions.
- Consideration of complaints or concerns relating to charging arrangements.
- Changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

15.4 Where monitoring identifies improvements or changes in legislation, the policy will be updated accordingly.

15.5 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where:

- There are significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance.
- The school's charging arrangements change.

- Monitoring identifies the need for revision.

15.6 The next scheduled review date is shown on the front page of this policy.