

St Margaret Clitherow's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy



Charging Policy

Date of Policy: Spring 2015

Date to be reviewed: Spring 2017

To be reviewed by: Mrs J Bieda

St Margaret Clitherow's School

Charging Policy

INTRODUCTION

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

St Margaret Clitherow's Primary School endorses the principle of the 1988 Education Act in maintaining the right to free education for all children. The act allows us to request voluntary contributions to broaden children's education experience. Non-contributions would not prejudice a pupil's place. However, unless most parents were prepared to make a contribution, the school may have to cancel the activity. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school can provide this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities, organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These are known as 'optional extras'. (The list is not exhaustive.)

- Visits to galleries or museums
- Sporting activities which require transport
- Sporting activities with external tuition
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visits to or by a theatre company / expert / performer (though the school pays for these, where possible)
- Musical events

RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

Such trips necessitate a higher level of funding, but are invaluable in giving the children first hand experiences, and in helping them to develop greater self-confidence and awareness of others. The trips are always part funded by the school. Most parents are obliged to at least pay for the residential expenses in such trips, and we also ask parents to contribute to the cost of the travel and activity expenses, as these are beyond the scope of our main school budget. A savings scheme operates, where possible, to spread the cost over a period of time.

Any parents who are experiencing financial difficulty will be encouraged to approach the school, where we will seek to find assistance with the charges. The Governing Body will determine the special circumstances as appropriate.

However, in all cases, parents will be expected to make a nominal contribution.

MUSIC TUITION

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.

We give parents details about any additional music tuition at the beginning of each academic year. There is a charge for individual or small group tuition, since this is an additional curriculum activity, and not part of the National Curriculum. Tuition is supplied from agencies using peripatetic music teachers, and they charge for this service.

SWIMMING

The school organises swimming lessons for a target year group – currently Year 4. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We therefore make no charge for these. Parents are informed when these are to take place.

BREAKFAST CLUB

Breakfast club is offered from 7.45 to 8.45am. For current charges, please contact the school.

Freedom of Information

Before complying with requests for information, the school will determine whether the request does come under Freedom of Information. A request for information may be covered by one, or all, of three information rights:

- Data Protection enquiries [or subject access requests] where the enquirer asks to see what personal information the school holds about him/her. Data Protection Act guidance should be followed.
- Environmental Information Regulations enquiries which relate to air, water, land, natural sites, built environment, flora and fauna, health and any decisions and activities affecting any of these. These could include enquiries about recycling, phone masts, school playing fields, car parking, etc.
- Freedom of information enquiries concerned with all other information and the reasoning behind decisions and policies. Any requests that are not data protection or environmental information are covered by the Freedom of Information Act.

If a request is made for a document [e.g. Governing Body minutes] which contains personal information, the release of which to a third party would breach the Data Protection Act, the document may be issued blanking out the relevant personal information.

Personal information requested by third parties is exempt under the FOIA where release of that information would breach data protection. Compliance with a request must be prompt and within the legally prescribed limit of 20 working days. The response time starts from the time the request is received. Where the school has asked the enquirer for more information to enable an appropriate answer, the 20 days start time begins when this further information has been received.

If a qualified exemption applies and more time is needed to consider the public interest test, a reply must be sent within 20 days stating that an exemption applies but an estimate of date by which a decision on the public interest test will be made should be included (normally 10 working days)

Charging for Information Governed by the Freedom of Information Act

St Margaret Clitherow's Primary School will comply with all reasonable requests for information governed by the Freedom of Information Act. Documentation will be made available in school for persons to access on school premises free of charge. Information will also be available on the school website. If documents have to be copied and posted an appropriate charge will be made.

Enquirers will be charged an amount sufficient to cover the costs to school resources that would otherwise support teaching and learning. Written notice of the charge will be given to the person requesting information and the school will not comply with the request until the fee is paid.

When calculating the estimated costs of complying with a request for information, the following will be taken into account:

- **The prescribed costs** – any costs reasonably incurred by the school in
 - o determining whether the information requested is actually held;
 - o locating and retrieving the information and in meeting the applicant's preference for communicating the information;
 - o the cost of associated staff time. This does not include the cost of staff time incurred in determining whether the school is obliged to comply with the request for information.

- **The disbursements** – costs directly and reasonably incurred by the school in
 - o informing the applicant whether the information is held
 - o communicating the information to the applicant

- the charge for complying with requests for information must not be more than the sum of the prescribed costs and the disbursements

If the cost of complying with any request exceeds the appropriate threshold/limit, the school is not obliged to comply

If the estimated cost of complying exceeds the threshold, the school is not required to comply with the request. However, it may choose to do so and charges would be calculated as:

- 10% of the prescribed cost for the first [£500]+
- the prescribed costs over [£500] +
- the disbursements

Where two or more requests are made by different people who appear to be acting together or as part of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total of complying with them all, provided that

- [a] the two or more requests referred to in that section are for information which is on the same subject matter or is otherwise related;
- [b] the last of the requests is received by the school before the twentieth working day following the date of receipt of the first of the requests;
- [c] it appears to the school that the requests have been made in an attempt to ensure that the prescribed costs of complying separately with each request would not exceed the appropriate limit.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is monitored by governors and will be reviewed again in Spring 2017.

Date agreed by the Committee

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