



## Charging Policy

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Approved By:	L Houghton	Date:	September 2023
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We acknowledge that the school must meet the statutory requirements laid down in the 1996 Education Act relating to charging for educational activities. We concur with the objectives behind this aspect of the Act which are detailed below. The objectives of the charging provisions in the 1996 Education Act are:-

- To maintain the right to free school education.
- To establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching times should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- To emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity but to give schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- To confirm the right of schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school whether during or outside school hours.

The 1996 Education Act requires any activity, taking place in school time to be free of charge apart from music tuition of groups of 4 children or less. The school hours of Sholing Infant School are from 8.55am to 3.00pm. For the purposes of this policy the lunch break is considered school hours, although the provision of a school lunch is not.

## Guidelines For Implementation

In order to meet the above objectives, we have agreed the following statements of principle:-

### General Education

There will be no charge for general education during normal school hours. Opportunities may arise during the year for pupils to participate in activities which are not essential to the National Curriculum or the EYFS framework but which enrich it and widen pupils' experience, e.g. educational visits to places of local interest and visits from theatre, arts and music groups. As no charge can be made for these, voluntary contributions will be requested from parents. No child will be denied participation regardless of any contribution made. However, if insufficient contributions are forthcoming, some activities will have to cease.

Some activities, which broaden and enrich the curriculum, can be expensive in material and ingredients. No charge is made for these items but a contribution towards school funds is always appreciated.

### Visiting Groups and Individuals

Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of a particular activity within the school such as a visiting theatre group. Where an activity cannot take place unless sufficient parents make a voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to the parents at the time of asking for financial support. No child will be excluded from this type of activity because their parents are unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The headteacher will agree the contribution the parents make having due regard to the family's financial situation.

The headteacher will decide if an activity is financially viable. Where it seems likely that an activity may have to be cancelled, the headteacher will consult with the Chair of Governors.



## **Educational Visits**

Parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an educational visit which occurs either wholly or mainly during school hours. Where a visit cannot take place unless sufficient parents make a voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to parents at the time of asking for permission to take their child on the visit. No child will be excluded from a visit because their parents are unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The headteacher will agree the contribution the parents make having due regard to the family's financial situation.

The headteacher will decide if an educational visit is financially viable. Where it seems likely that a visit may have to be cancelled, the headteacher will consult with the Chair of Governors.

## **Damage to School Property**

There is no reference to breakages or fines in the Act's Charging provisions. Where a child has wilfully damaged school property, the headteacher will decide after carefully considering the context in which the damage took place, whether parents should be asked to contribute to all or part of the cost of replacing the damaged item.

## **Clubs and Activities**

There may be a charge for extra-curricular clubs and activities held outside school hours. There may also be a charge for any resources required by the club e.g. sewing or art materials. Parents will always be advised of the costs involved when their permission is sought for the child to participate.

## **Value for Money**

We believe that we should always seek to maximise the value for money we obtain for any activity. We are committed to keeping costs as low as possible whilst maximising the educational or social benefit of any of the above activities. This statement should be borne in mind by any member of staff seeking financial contributions from parents.

## **Informing Parents of this Policy**

Parents will be informed that the policy is available on the school's website and that hard copies are available from the school office.

## **Monitoring this Policy**

The headteacher will monitor all letters which go out seeking financial contributions to ensure they meet the statements of principle set out in this policy.

The policy will be reviewed every year by the governing body (This may be delegated to the head teacher)

When reviewing the policy, the headteacher will report to governors on how the policy has been operating and whether it has been successful. In particular, the headteacher will report on the numbers of parents seeking remissions of charges due to financial hardship, the percentage of parents who are unwilling or unable to make voluntary contributions, whether children are being disadvantaged because their parents are unwilling or unable to make financial contributions and whether activities are being unduly affected because of financial considerations.

