



# CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

Version 1.2 – September 2017

# St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

## Charging and Remissions Policy

This policy has been adopted by St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, in order to set out the circumstances in which the schools within the Trust will charge for certain activities, and the remissions which are available for those charges.

In this policy, the term “parent” includes any person who is a natural or adopted parent of a student, as well as any person who is not a natural or adopted parent of a student, but who has care of a student, or parental responsibility for a student.

### 1. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

### 2. School Meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged in accordance with the published charges.

### 3. Public Examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school’s set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that pupil’s parents.

### 4. Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

In general, and subject to the exceptions set out below, there is no charge for activities during school hours with the exception of music tuition (**section 9**).

There is no charge for transport to any other premises where the school has arranged for pupils to be educated.

#### **In respect of activities that take place during school hours, the school may charge for:**

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep, including materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- music or vocal tuition (**section 9**).

Note that there is a distinction between the cost of activities being undertaken, and the cost of any board or lodging (which is covered in section 8)

## 5. Activities that take place outside of school hours

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours where they are:

- part of the set curriculum
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

The school will not make any charge for organised sports matches against other schools.

Note that there is a distinction between the cost of activities being undertaken, and the cost of any board or lodging (which is covered in section 8)

## 6. Optional extras

*The School will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:*

- education or activities provided outside of school time that are **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
  - c) part of religious education

For example, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, or non-curriculum-related school trips.

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school

### The cost of optional extras

The school will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional extras.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

When 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, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra

The charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. So no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The School will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

### **7. Activities that take place *partly* during school hours either on or off site**

There are complicated formulae for calculating whether an activity, trip or residential visit which takes place partly during and partly outside school hours will be deemed to take place during or outside school hours for charging purposes. This will be made clear to parents in any letter regarding an activity.

Travelling time is included in time spent on activity for the purposes of determining whether the activity takes place during school hours.

### **8. Board and Lodging**

**Our school will charge for board and lodging on all residential trips.**

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential trips, whether the trip is classified as taking place during school hours or not and whether or not it is covered by section 5 of this policy. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. **Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost** (see **section 11** for more guidance on remissions).

#### **Travel**

Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours does not fall within section 5 of this policy. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil.

### **9. Music tuition within school hours**

The Trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule within the legislation.

**Charges will be made if** the teaching is **not** an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination syllabus being followed by pupils.

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to 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. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

**The school will not charge if** the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or prescribed public examination syllabus being followed by the student.

## **10. Damage to property and breakages**

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil /parent or member of staff the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Trust and dependent on the situation.

## **11. Remissions and concessions**

There is a statutory remission scheme for compulsory charges made for board and lodging on residential visits which either take place during school hours, or are provided as part of the national curriculum, the syllabus for a prescribed examination, or statutory religious education. Where the remission scheme applies, the school will fund the board and lodging element of these residential visits for eligible students.

Parents will be eligible for statutory remission if they are in receipt of any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit (in prescribed circumstances)

Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

[In addition to the statutory remission scheme, the school operates a discretionary support fund covering all activities for which compulsory charges are made. Eligibility for a Support Fund grant mirrors eligibility for statutory remission, as outlined above. The school will make it clear in the letter to parents notifying them of the activity, trip or visit and the costs involved whether a Support Fund grant may be available to assist eligible parents with some or all of the costs involved and, if so, what the application deadline is.

The Support Fund is limited and, accordingly, there is no automatic right to full or partial remissions of costs, as there is with statutory remission. Once the application deadline has been reached, the Headteacher will consider all applications and make decision fairly and consistently having regard to the number of applications received and the level of funding available.

Complete confidentiality will be observed at all times.]

## **12. Voluntary contributions**

The School may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity for which the school is not able to charge cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. It will also be made clear that the activity may be cancelled if sufficient voluntary contributions are not received. Where the amount requested in respect of an activity or trip consists of a combination of compulsory charges and voluntary payments, this will be made clear.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

### **13. Inability or unwillingness to make a voluntary contribution**

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to (or could not) make a voluntary contribution will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

### **14. Refunds**

A refund of a compulsory charge or voluntary payment received will be made only where the following circumstances apply:

- The activity, trip or visit was cancelled due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and/or his parents; or
- The School made a decision that the student will not take part in an activity, trip or visit for any reason. Where this is as a result of the student's behaviour, the refund will be reduced by the amount of any costs already incurred by the school.

Where a student/parent has decided to pull out of an activity, trip or visit, the school will be under no obligation to refund any compulsory charge or voluntary payment received.

**This policy will be reviewed every three years.**