

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The community of St. Mark's believes that every individual is created by God and is precious to God. Each person is called to serve God and their neighbour and to fulfil their potential.

St. Mark's is a Catholic School which has at its heart a love of God, the education of its students and a mission to serve our neighbours and community. We seek to foster a spirit of truth, reconciliation, justice and peace. We are committed to developing the spiritual, intellectual, moral, cultural, social and physical potential of all our members within a safe and supportive environment.

The essence of the Education Reform Act 1988 is that with the exception of one-to-one music tuition, no compulsory charge may be made for any activity which occurs for more than 50% of the time within normal school hours nor for any essential materials or equipment used during school hours. However, LEAs and schools are given the discretion to charge for optional activities which are provided wholly or mainly out of school hours. The Act does confirm the right of schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity organised by the school whether during or outside school hours. It has always been the policy of the school to encourage a diversity of extra-curricular activity, particularly school journeys and visits, in order to widen the educational experiences of the pupils.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Hounslow has always recognised the holistic nature of the curriculum and has provided resources to schools for a wide range of extra-mural activities. However, many of these activities would not have been able to take place if parents had not been willing to fund them either partly or in full. If the extra-curricular life of the school is not to be impoverished by the Act, an increasing responsibility is placed upon parents to support these activities with a commonsense approach that recognises the need to replace charges with voluntary contributions. Parents will be advised in writing in each instance when a school activity, such as a school journey or field trip, requires extra funding from voluntary contributions. The consequence of insufficient voluntary contributions forthcoming would be a cancellation of that activity. The school has a limited budget and to fund one activity can only reduce funds to other areas of school life. However, no pupil will be disadvantaged by a parent's unwillingness or inability to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Where a charge is permissible under the Act (e.g. in the case of all out of school hours activities such as an evening visit to the theatre), Governors reserve the right to pass on the full cost. However, Governors would be prepared to remit part or all of the charge in necessitous cases. Special arrangements apply for pupils whose parents are in receipt of income support

or family credit and in such cases application for assistance should be made to the Headteacher.

COSTING OF TRIPS/VISITS:

In some instances the School need to predict the full cost of a trip/visit, this is due to incidentals e.g. emergencies, medical care, public travel, exchange rate variances.

We will endeavour to do our best to keep costs to a minimum and always source the “Best Value” option available to minimise costs to parents.

In cases where funds are surplus after all invoices and expenses have been paid the remainder will be credited back to the parents if the sum is over £5.00 per head.

When the sum calculates to below £5.00 per head surplus, the School will move the monies to the “School Fund”. This fund is used for educational material that benefits all pupils.

The School reserves the right to spend the “School Fund” as seen as appropriate by School Leaders and Governors.

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS – REQUIREMENTS IN KIND

Where ingredients, materials, equipment, etc. are needed for practical subjects such as Technology, parents will be asked in advance for their agreement to take ownership of the finished product and will therefore be expected to supply the essential materials etc.

EXAMINATIONS

The Governors reserve the right to charge for: the entry of pupils into non-prescribed public examinations, prescribed examinations for which the pupil has not been prepared, the entry fee if a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any prescribed public examination.

BREAKAGES AND FINES

Resulting from a pupil’s behaviour, parents may be charged the cost of any wilful damage to school property or the loss or damage of any books or material supplied by the school.

MUSIC TUITION IN SCHOOL HOURS

All Hounslow Music Service tuition is in small groups up to Grade 5. After Grade 5 individual tuition can be arrange. All tuition will be charged for unless the family is in receipt of income support or family credit, when a voluntary contribution will be requested. Payment will be made termly and in advance. The Governors will continue to keep their statement of charging and remissions policy under review.

MINIBUS USE

A charge may be levied for travel to an activity outside school hours in the school's minibus. The charge can include all costs of operating the minibus, including an element for depreciation.

DEPOSITS

The Governors reserve the right to levy a deposit for textbooks which will be returned to pupils once they have brought books back to school at the end of the course or the year.

Last Reviewed: October 2018