Charging and Remissions Policy

Reviewed March 2017

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1. Introduction

At St Francis we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

2. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

3. School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or universal infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per term decided by the governing body of the school.

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

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the statutory National Curriculum, with the exception voluntary contributions towards trips.

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities unless as part of an additional trip, when a voluntary contribution will be required towards coach costs.

We may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras (section 5)

5. Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

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

- part of the set curriculum, *including sports matches against other schools*
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

Education provided outside of school time that is **not:**

a) part of the statutory National Curriculum

b) part of religious education core curriculum

The following is a list of the 'optional extras' organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are usually additional to the core statutory curriculum, but are known to enrich and enhance learning.

This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums or places of interest
- sporting activities which require transport expenses
- outdoor adventure activities
- visits to the theatre
- school trips abroad
- musical events

The cost of 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 (section 12).

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 cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

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.

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

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in **section 4.**

Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours 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.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in **section 5.**

7. Residential activities

Where the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, no charge will be made for the education or travel expenses. However, a charge will cover the costs of board and lodging. Support is available for families who are on low income or those with more than one child attending the journey for example; twins.

9. Extended services

St Francis is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our students which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services)
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

Breakfast Club

In order to ensure that overall costs are covered and that the extended school activities can be sustained beyond the funding grants, it is sometimes necessary to ask parents to make a contribution towards the costs of the activities.

The cost of breakfast club is £1.50 per session. This can be paid on daily, weekly or half termly basis.

After School Clubs

The cost of clubs ranges from £10-£40 depending on the level of specialism required. Subsidised places are available in line with the criteria laid out in the school's overall charging policy.

Nursery Charges

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has reduced the funding significantly from 33 hours (full-time)to 15 hours (part-time) per week for children aged 3 and 4 and who are eligible for nursery places.

In order to retain our full-time offer, we now charge £5 per session, payable on a weekly or monthly basis in advance. We offer up to 14 free places for those families who are in receipt of Income Support and eligible for free school meals and fulfil the school Admissions criteria.

- Fees will not be refunded in the case of illness or any other reason.
- Failure to pay fees in advance will result in the withdrawal of the place.

Admission

The Nursery will have places for 30 children. If there are more applications than places available, places will be allocated in accordance with the guidelines set out in the school's Admission Criteria.

10. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been damaged by a student (or parent) 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 Headteacher and dependent on the situation.

11. Remissions and concessions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made **may be offered** at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. The following paragraphs set out the circumstances in which charges may be waive. This remains at the discretion of the Governing Body based on individual circumstances

CATEGORIES WHICH MAY QUALIFY FOR REMISSION OR SUBSIDY

Parents in receipt of:

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

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in some circumstances:

- When there are twins/triplets in a family – governors will help with the cost of school journey and trips
- Vulnerable families involved with social services or other agencies
- Parents on low incomes experiencing financial difficulties

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice, it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

12. Voluntary contributions

When organising school trips or visits, which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

13. Inability or unwillingness to pay

St Francis 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 pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is costed and funded. The school provides this information on request.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Finance Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on an annual basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support.

Approved by Full Governing Body

Signed:

_____ (Headteacher)

_____ (Chair of Governors)

Date: _____

Date for Next Review: **March 2018**