


St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Charging and Remissions Policy

	Reviewed	January 2024
	Next Review	January 2025

1. Introduction

The basic principle underlying the charging provisions of the Education Reform Act 1988 is that education provided by any maintained school for its pupils should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours. The 1988 Act and the subsequent DES Circular (2/89: *Charges for School Activities*) establish those areas where charging for school activities is permissible and where it is not, and also clarify the circumstances under which voluntary contributions may be requested.

The objectives of the charging provisions of the 1988 Act are:

- to maintain the right to a free school education;
- to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during school hours 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 LA's and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours;
- to confirm the right of LA's and school 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.

The governors of St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School are committed to the principle of free education but also recognise that voluntary contributions by parents make a significant contribution to the provision of optional activities. This policy therefore sets out the circumstances in which charges and remission will be made and the kinds of activities for which voluntary contributions may be requested.

2. Individual Instrumental Music Tuition

2.1 Charging

Peripatetic staff visit the school to provide individual and group tuition in a range of musical instruments. The 1988 Act permits parents to be charged for this tuition, and the current arrangement is that this charge is made by Surrey County Arts, by whom all peripatetic music staff are employed. The school, therefore, is not directly involved in making the charge.

2.2 Remission

Because the school does not levy the charge for music tuition it is not possible for the school to remit that charge. However, if sponsorship or some other form of subsidy could be arranged, the school would support the principle of subsidising individual music tuition for pupils.

3. Board and Lodging

3.1 Charging

In the event of any residential visit being arranged by the school, it is the intention of the governing body to charge the actual cost of providing board and lodging to each participating pupil. Additional costs incurred in providing the residential visit (e.g. transport costs, entrance fees, the costs of resources and the cost of supply cover) will be requested as a voluntary contribution. It will be made clear, however, that the residential visit could not take place if there are insufficient voluntary contributions to support it.

3.2 Remission

The governing body will observe the statutory requirement to remit the full cost of board and lodging in the case of pupils whose parents meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals. Parents will be informed of the arrangements for remission for each residential visit, and will be asked to produce appropriate documentation prior to the cost being remitted.

3.3 Delegation

The governing body delegates to the Headteacher the discretion to remit some or all of the board and lodging costs of residential visits organised by the school in appropriate circumstances, for example, when sponsorship or voluntary contributions enable a general reduction in charges. In such cases the criteria applied for remission will be made clear to parents and other interested parties, and children will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made a voluntary contribution.

4. Education outside school hours

4.1 Charging

No charges may be made for education provided wholly or mainly outside school hours where the education is provided:

- to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination; or
- specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum; or
- specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Other education provided wholly or mainly outside school hours is defined as an “optional extra”, and it is the intention of the governing body to charge for such optional extra activities organised by the school. The basis for calculating the charge will be the proportionate cost, where appropriate, to each participating pupil for travel costs, board and lodging, materials,

books and equipment, entrance fees and insurance. Staffing costs may also be included if they fall into the following categories:

- teaching staff employed by the governing body for the purpose of providing the activity; or
- teaching staff employed by the governing body to provide instrumental music tuition, or
- teaching staff already employed by the LA or governing body who have been engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra.

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, the school will apply the formula outlined in the 1988 Act to determine whether it is deemed to take place in or out of school hours. This calculation will be used as the basis for determining whether a charge may be applied.

4.2 Remission

The governing body delegates to the Headteacher the discretion to remit some or all of the charges for optional extra activities, where voluntary contributions, sponsorship or other forms of subsidy permit. In such cases the criteria applied for remission will be made clear to parents and other interested parties, but children will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made a voluntary contribution.

5. Voluntary Contributions

The restrictions on charging for school activities do not in any way prohibit the school from seeking voluntary contributions in support of any school activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential. Such activities shall include educational visits (e.g. to museums), visits to the school by storytellers, artists etc. Where an additional voluntary contribution is requested for a specific activity, this shall usually be where the activity is for a particular year group and / or where the funding required to run the activity would exceed the amount available.

The governors of St Lawrence have adopted the county policy on charging for activities and have added the following:

All pupils are expected to participate in one-day visits and although all payments for educational visits and activities shall be regarded as voluntary, parents and guardians will be asked to pay the cost of these excursions.

If a significant number of parents felt that they were no longer able to cover the cost of the visits and activities then they would have to cease since the school budget is not large enough to support the cost of them without voluntary contributions.

No child will be excluded because they are unable to pay the full cost.

In the case of financial hardship, the class teacher should be contacted so that arrangements may be made for a reduced cost.

6. Requests for Evaluation of Pupils by Independent and Grammar Schools

6.1 Charging

The governing body will levy a charge on each completed request from a private school for written evidence of a pupil's performance, aptitude and attainment and other relevant information in respect of each application. Please see fact sheet at the end of this policy.

The charge will be as determined by the governing body, and is currently set at £30 per request.

6.2 Remission

There will be no remission, the governing body having decided that application to a private school is a voluntary act by parents.

6.3 Passport Countersigning

The governing body will levy a charge of £10 per request for passport countersigning.

6.4 Remission

There will be no remission as this is a voluntary request by parents.

6.5 Lost School Reports

The governing body will levy a charge of up to a maximum of £5, at the Headteacher's discretion, depending on the work and cost involved to replace lost school reports.

6.6 Remission

There will be no remission as this is a voluntary request by parents.

6.7 Confirmation/evidence letters

The governing body will levy a charge of £5 per request for letters giving confirmation of attendance or identity

6.8 Remission

There will be no remission as these are voluntary requests by parents.

7 Breakage, Damage, Loss of School Property, Equipment and Books

7.1 Charging

There is no statutory reference to breakage or damage to school property in the 1988 Act. The governing body has decided in the absence of such, to delegate to the Headteacher the discretion to seek financial compensation from parents or carers for damage to, or breakage/loss of school property or equipment, where this was caused by deliberate/wilful behaviour, accident or neglect. The librarian requests the cost to replace lost library books. Lost exercise books, home/school books etc. are charged at £1 each.

8 Other Activities

There may be other activities arranged by third party organisations, which hire requisite parts of the school premises. Such activities in the past have included Sewing Club, Chess Club, Elite Football. The charging arrangements for all of these are the direct and sole responsibility of the organisations concerned.

9 Complaints

The governing body has established a formal complaints procedure, **Responding to Parents' Concerns**, which is based on the LA's model policy. If parents or carers are unhappy with the application of the Charging and Remissions Policy, they should in the first instance discuss the matter with the Headteacher. A summary of the complaints procedure will be made available for parents to provide guidance on how to proceed.

Independent / Grammar School Reports – Fact Sheet

Each year we are asked to supply confidential reports about our pupils for independent/grammar schools. The number of requests increases almost every year and was 46 in 2022. This equates to 12+ for each teacher (although they are not of course necessarily spread evenly across the classrooms). We have charged for private school reports since 2002.

Some parents apply to multiple schools and the independent schools request references for every applicant and every school has a different form, asking for different, specific information. The teachers understand the importance of the reports to the pupils' futures and take great care, and a great deal of time, completing them.

Some independent schools place as much as 25% of their decision making on the report we provide.

Schools request reports throughout the year, but mainly in the autumn term when we could be dealing with 20+ at any one time. They put additional pressure on the teaching and administrative staff at what is already a busy time.

We are very aware of our responsibility in respect of our pupils and parents, as well as our professional response to our independent colleagues.

Procedure:

Request received and logged by School Business Manager (SBM)

Pro forma printed off and initial details entered by SBM

SBM requests payment from parent

Office advised to expect payment

Payment received and logged (or payment chased)

Report pro forma given to Classteacher by SBM

Teacher completes report

Completed report returned to SBM. Headteacher signs off if required

Report posted or scanned and emailed to school by SBM and date recorded

SBM places copy on pupil file

References are sometimes followed up by a telephone call or email to the Head asking for additional information

We charge £30 for each reference, which hasn't changed in 20 years. This is towards the cost of staff time, postage and stationery.

NB Reports are confidential school to school. Parents may not have a copy.