



## St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

### Charging, Remissions and Debt Policy

Date policy approved:	March 2023
Date due for review:	January 2026

#### AIM

At St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School, we aim to make appropriate charges which enable and encourage the development of a wide range of enriching activities and uses of our facilities by our community and pupils.

#### PRINCIPLES

- We will make no charges to pupils for National Curriculum and related activities in school time.
- We may ask for voluntary contributions for activities outside the National Curriculum, which are wholly or partly in school time which would otherwise be prohibited by cost. No pupil shall be excluded from any such activity on the basis of non-contribution.
- We will support pupils' extracurricular activity in part or full where the child receives Free School Meals.
- We may charge where it enables an increase or enriches non-statutory extras curricular provision at any time.
- We support the development of all community groups who wish to use School facilities through a flexible charging approach.
- We will raise income for the benefit of pupils at St John's the Baptist Church of England Primary School from groups who wish to use School's facilities whilst keeping charges for non-profit making community activities at as low a cost as practicable.
- We may offer chargeable administrative services to users.

#### RELATED DOCUMENTS

Following the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1988, no charge will be made for books, materials, equipment and instruction in connection with the National Curriculum or statutory Religious Education taught at School, except where parents/carers have indicated in advance their wish to purchase the product.

#### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

##### Governors

The Governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, are responsible for the implementation of the Charging, Remissions and Debt Policy.

#### Governors will:

- review and amend the Charging, Remissions and Debt Policy on behalf of the Governing Body.
- review annually the charges for supplies and services.
- monitor whether actual income is in line with anticipated income
- review significant debts owed by parents/carers (over £100) and write letters if needed and agree when the school should ask HCC debt collection to become involved

#### Finance Manager will:

- provide effective financial administration enabling efficient budget management.
- manage the letting of school premises.
- maintain efficient and effective information systems.

#### Users will:

- abide by the terms and conditions of the booking and hiring contract and the Lettings Policy.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Curriculum activities**

A voluntary contribution may be requested for the benefit of the school for any school activities. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Headteacher will make this clear to parents/carers at the outset. The Headteacher **must** also make it clear to parents/carers that there is no obligation to make any contribution. The school will endeavour to give a minimum of 3 weeks' notice for any requests for voluntary contributions and 2 months' notice for requests for voluntary contributions over £40.

### **Off-site activities**

A voluntary contribution, not exceeding the actual cost, will be requested.

### **Residential study visits**

Costs for a residential visit can include elements for: travel, board and lodging, materials, books, instruments, equipment, tuition, entrance fees and insurance. Each child will be charged for the cost of their own part of the visit. The parents/carers / carers of pupils who receive Free School Meals; are requested to pay 50% of the cost. However, these residential visits can be life changing experiences and we would seek to access other funds to support children who take Free School Meals rather than not have them attend.

### **Instrumental teaching**

#### **Peripatetic Music**

The cost of instrumental lessons to individuals or small groups will be met through charges to parents/carers. Charges are set on an annual basis and paid in advance termly. Parents/carers will be expected to hire or buy their child's own instrument. Some instruments may be available for loan from Hampshire Music Service. Pupils who receive Free School Meals are requested to pay 50% of the cost. However, music can be life changing and in the school would seek to access other funds to support children who take Free School Meals to learn to play an instrument rather than have them miss out, if they wish to learn. Looked after children may learn an instrument free of charge and the school will cover the cost via their pupil premium spending.

### **Extra-curricular clubs**

### Run by school staff

A charge may be levied for participation in extra-curricular activities to meet the costs of materials as needed. Charges are set prior to the activity and paid in advance.

### Run by outside agencies

The school will endeavour to select outside agencies that offer best value. Where clubs are run by outside agencies a cost will usually apply. This payment will be made direct to the agency involved.

### Damaged property

Parents/carers are asked to make a contribution towards replacing damaged or lost school property caused wilfully or negligently by their children.

### Letting of premises

Please see separate Lettings policy.

### Charges for services

Details of charges for photocopier, laminating and telephone facilities are available from the school office.

### Freedom of Information Act Information / Subject Access Requests

Charges may be made for Freedom of Information / Subject Access Requests as detailed in the school's Publication Scheme.

### Arrangements for part or full remissions of charges

The Governors may provide financial support from the school budget or external grants for children in receipt of Free School Meals, and for children looked after by the local authority, unable to meet the full cost of voluntary contributions or charges, on application to the Headteacher. The Governing Body will be informed in general terms of the total provided for each activity. Any support given shall be on a case by case basis and agreed with a member of the Governing Body.

Parents/carers who have contributed voluntarily may request a refund if their child is unable to take part in an activity through illness, within the guidelines given at the time. In many cases, costs will already have been incurred by the school and a refund cannot be guaranteed.

## **MANAGEMENT OF DEBT PROCEDURES**

The school cannot give unsecured credit to parents/carers. All activities / dinners / Little Johns sessions / music tuition etc are expected to be paid for in advance. ***We encourage all families not to run up debts to the school as this causes extra work for our team and can be awkward for parents/carers/carers. Please ensure your accounts for dinners etc are in credit. If your financial circumstances change and you are not able to afford to pay for things you could previously, please speak to the Finance Officer or Headteacher at the earliest opportunity so that we can help you to work out a payment plan and signpost you to other support that may be available'***

### School Dinners

The procedures are as follows:

1. Parents/carers owing under £14.00
  - A reminder to be sent out on a weekly basis that states the preferred method of payment is in advance on the Arbor system or alternatively by cheque / cash in the secure letterbox by the main entrance.
  - If the debt is not cleared a second reminder is to be sent the following week as above.

- If still not cleared, within one week, an email, text or phone call will be made to the parents/carers asking for payment and chased weekly by the office until payment is made.
- Accumulated debts for families and Year 6 pupils will be closely monitored by the office
- 2. Parents/carers owing over £14.00
  - A letter is sent asking for payment and requesting that a packed lunch is brought in for their child until the debt is cleared.
  - If a lunch is not provided the office staff will contact the parent to bring one in or immediately clear the debt.
- 3. For any parents/carers with a debt that is not being reduced (by regular payments) and / or is over £100 a letter will be sent from the office stating that the debt will be reviewed by the Governing Body and that it may be passed on to the HCC Debt department for recovery
- 4. The Governing Body shall review debts outstanding and governors may write or telephone parents/carers to discuss plans for payment.

### **Little Johns**

Please see separate terms and conditions document issued to parents/carers when they register at Little Johns.

### **Peripatetic Music lessons**

Letters are sent out at the end of the previous term to all enrolled pupils giving terms and conditions of lessons and requesting immediate payment when a place is offered for the following terms lessons.

- Payment is termly in advance, with an initial deposit paid at the end of the previous academic year. If payment is not received by the first lesson of each term, a phone call, letter, email or text will be sent requesting payment immediately. Failure to pay the outstanding money within 3 weeks will lead to the place being withdrawn and offered to another child.
- A copy of the above letter is sent out again after a further week.
- If payment is still not forthcoming, the office will ring, email or text the parent to chase payment and determine whether the pupil wishes to continue with their lessons.
- For any parents/carers with a debt that is not being reduced (by regular payments) and / or is over £100 a letter will be sent from the office stating that the debt will be reviewed by the Governing Body and that it may be passed on to the HCC Debt department for recovery
- The Governing Body shall review debts outstanding and governors may write or telephone parents/carers to discuss plans for payment.

### **Educational School Visits**

Voluntary contributions are requested for Educational School Visits, therefore, no parent can be chased for recovery regarding these. However, the cost of any residential visits are required to be paid in full before departure.

- Regular updated lists are given to the teachers showing which pupils have paid and any outstanding amounts.
- Reminders will be placed on the Jottings or sent by Arbor to the relevant year groups.
- Payments for residential visits are to be paid in full before departure.
- If a residential visit is not paid in advance the school will chase the debt as for dinner money and if payment is not forthcoming, reserve the right to provide and educate the child at school rather than have the pupil attend the residential visit. The school highly values the experience of a residential for children and would seek to establish a payment plan and support parents/carers to make regular payments rather than remove the opportunity.
- For any parents/carers with a debt that is not being reduced (by regular payments) and / or is over £100 after they have attended a residential, or left the school, a letter will be sent

from the office stating that the debt will be reviewed by the Governing Body and that it may be passed on to the HCC Debt department for recovery

- The Governing Body shall review debts outstanding and governors may write or telephone parents/carers to discuss plans for payment.

Financial assistance is sought from St John the Baptist Church in Shedfield, The Rotary Club, the Lions and other local charitable organisations.

### **Refunds**

Please note that refunds will be transferred to other debts held by that pupil or their siblings in the first instance. The school is unable to process any refunds under £10.