

St Thomas' CE Primary School

Charging Policy October 2017

Purpose

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 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. The policy has been informed by *A Guide to the Law for School Governors*.

Principles

All education during school hours is free.

We do not charge for day to day learning activities undertaken as part of the National Curriculum.

At St Thomas' CE Primary School, we aim to provide a range of experiences which add excitement and enjoyment to children's learning and personal development. All our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Voluntary Contributions

When organising school trips or visits to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost. These may include activities such as:

- visits to museums & galleries
- sporting activities
- outdoor adventure activities
- visits to or by a theatre company or music/dance groups
- visiting groups with specific skills (eg: African drumming groups)

All contributions are voluntary and the school attempts to subsidise a wide range of trips and visits as possible as part of our enrichment and creative curriculum offer. If a trip goes ahead, it will include children whose parents may not have paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school will provide this information on request.

Travel, wherever possible, is undertaken through funding available from Transport for London's scheme for free travel on public transport for schools.

Frequently asked questions

What happens if I am unwilling to pay?

Your contribution is voluntary. Your child will not be excluded from the activity. However, if the school does not receive enough voluntary contributions we may have to cancel the activity.

What happens if I am unable to pay?

All contributions are voluntary. Your child will not be excluded from the activity. However, if the school does not receive enough voluntary contributions we may have to cancel the activity.

Will my voluntary contribution pay for people who have not paid?

No. The amount we ask in voluntary contribution will not cover the costs of the trip for children whose families cannot or do not pay.

Extended Schools Provision

Out of hours clubs and activities incur a charge but costs are kept as low as possible. The school looks at the charges regularly to consider whether further reductions might be made. The school, when possible, allocates some funding to subsidise clubs. At the discretion of the Headteacher, provision may be offered to vulnerable children such as children who are looked after or have extenuating circumstances which require them to have this provision.

When individual or small-group music tuition is offered which is above and beyond the music offered as part of the national curriculum, lessons may be taught by peripatetic music teachers. In these instances, parents will be charged for lessons and we give parents information about any provision which incurs a charge at the start of each academic year.

Many of these activities have a cost associated with them and, unfortunately, cannot be provided unless we ask parents for voluntary contributions and, in some cases, make a charge. But there are some strict rules we have to abide by. Our charging policy, which has been agreed by governors, sets out what we will charge for, how we will try to make it manageable for parents and how we will help parents with limited incomes.

Residential Visits – School Journey

We believe that every child should have an opportunity to attend a residential visit during their time at St Thomas' Primary School. This will be built into the school curriculum every year for pupils in Year 5.

We will request a contribution towards transport, board and lodging. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who would find it difficult to pay for this residential visit, should approach the school to discuss payment options and any support that may be available. Upon approaching the school, parents will be invited to meet a senior member of staff and complete a short application form together (Appendix A).

We promise to help you to plan for these costs by:

- Issuing a calendar of visits/activities to ensure that you have as much notice as possible.
- Having clear procedures to enable you to pay by instalments.

Online Payments

Parents can pay online using the *SchoolGateway* website or app. This can be reached at www.schoolgateway.co.uk or by downloading from your app store. These payments go directly into the school bank account and will show up on the child's account. Parents can keep a track of all payments and debts using this system. Breakfast club sessions can be booked and paid directly, receipts will be emailed to the parents straightaway.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Finance Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a regular basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied (eg School Journey), 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.

Appendix A

Application for School Journey

Funding Subsidy

Name: _____

Name of child: _____

My Child is entitled to free school meals YES/NO

Reasons for applying for funding subsidy

Total cost of journey: £_____

Amount agreed to be paid by parent: £_____

Agreed by: _____ **(staff)**

Signed by parent: _____

Forms will be submitted to governors anonymously

Date agreed by governors finance committee _____