

Thomas A' Becket Infant School



Charging for School Activities Policy (previously Charging and Remissions for School Activities Policy)

Introduction

Thomas A'Becket Infant School provides many opportunities for its children to enrich and enhance their experience through Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC). This encompasses on-site and off-site learning, environmental studies, sports, physical and cultural activities.

The value of LOtC is well recognised by the Governing Body and fully supported throughout the school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear information about charging and voluntary contributions for Thomas A' Becket Infant School activities.

Voluntary Contributions

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it should be free.

It is therefore not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or admission costs for educational visits to museums, etc. during school hours.

Thomas A Becket Infant School follows the West Sussex policy for charging for school activities that mirrors the information given in the Department for Education's advice document published in May 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>) and should be read in conjunction with the information provided in the National Guidance www.oeapng.info.

No compulsory charge will be made for any activity which takes place during school hours.

Any contribution is entirely voluntary, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute are not discriminated against. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then the activity will be cancelled.

Arrangements

All letters regarding contributions for school activities will make it clear that these are voluntary and that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated differently.

If any parents have any financial difficulty (no child will be prevented from taking part) they will be invited to talk to the Headteacher who will come to an agreed arrangement.

Forest School

Thomas A'Becket Infant School provides a Forest School experience for all its children throughout the year. Forest School is not part of the national curriculum, however Governors believe it has huge educational and developmental benefits for children.

To enable our school to continue with this programme, a small voluntary contribution will be requested from all parents each September to cover the academic year. These contributions will be 'ring fenced' and used specifically to purchase materials and provisions for Forest School as well as making a contribution towards the general upkeep and repair of the Forest School area.

As detailed above, should we not receive sufficient voluntary contributions to keep the programme financially viable for the school, we may need to cancel the programme.

Residential visits

Special rules apply for residential activities.

a) In School Hours

If a residential activity takes place covering 50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity occurs within the school week, or it meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination or is to do with the national curriculum or religious education, no charge will be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

However, charges not exceeding the actual cost for the individual pupil will be made for board and lodging.

Voluntary contributions (as above) will be requested to cover all other costs.

Parents / carers of children who are eligible and registered for income based Free School Meals will be entitled to the remission of these charges.

b) Outside School Hours

An activity is deemed to take place out of school hours if 50% or more of the whole time spent on the activity occurs out of the school week and is not a requirement of the syllabus for a public examination or is not to do with the national curriculum or religious education.

In this case, this will be considered as an 'optional extra' and a charge will be levied which includes an appropriate element for travel costs, board and lodging costs, materials and other equipment, non-teaching costs and teaching staff costs. This charge will not exceed the actual cost of the provision.

Parents / carers of children who are eligible and registered for income based Free School Meals will be entitled to the remission of these charges.

Music Tuition

There will be no charge for musical tuition if the teaching is an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

For other musical tuition, charges will be made for individuals or groups to play a musical instrument, and for the hire and repair of instruments which are used for instrumental tuition at school.

No charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Refund Policy

Where a child is unable to attend a school trip after payment has been made (e.g. due to illness), a request for a refund will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis.

For a residential trip, if the school has already had to pay funds to the provider(s) of accommodation and / or activities in advance of the trip based on confirmed pupil numbers, any refund will be in line with the provider's own refund policy.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Governing Body will review this policy every 3 years, and as necessary due to any changes in legislation.

Committee	Signed by	Date
Finance & Resources	Martin Winstone - (Acting) Chair	22 June 2021

Review Date	Summer 2024 or as and when guidelines change
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West Sussex County Council POLICY ON CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The WSCC policy for charging and remission for school activities is the same as the advice issued by the Department for Education in May 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>)

The Department's advice should be read in conjunction with the information provided in the WSCC policy for charging as outlined in the national guidance: <http://oeapng.info/>

It is expected that this will be updated in light of the guidance from the DfE.

These documents explain the legislation governing the charging for school activities as set out in the Education Act 1996: Sections 449-462. They cover what a governing body may and may not charge for when activities take place either during or outside of school hours, including residential visits.

No charges can be made unless the governing body of the school or local authority has drawn up a charging policy giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for, and a remissions policy.

The policy statement should take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents/carers need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). This information should be made available to parents/carers.

The following example letters (Appendix 2) are provided to assist schools to comply with the required legislation.

EXAMPLE LETTER 1

(Ref: Purchase of equipment, books or musical instruments)

Dear Parent,

During each school year pupils, as part of the curriculum, may make certain articles out of materials provided by the school. There are also occasions when specific books, equipment or instruments might be acquired for pupils.

At times, parents might wish to own such items, and it is possible for these to be purchased from the school at a price equivalent to the cost incurred by the school.

If you are interested in buying any items, please either detach and return the slip below indicating your wish to make a purchase or write to me at any time during the year.

You will be told the cost of any item in a note which your son/daughter will bring home.

Payment would become due immediately. Naturally if, you do not wish to own any particular article, your child will not be disadvantaged in any way as the school has a duty to provide all materials and equipment to ensure an effective delivery of the National Curriculum.

If any parent is interested in owning materials or equipment, but feels unable to meet the cost at present, please do not hesitate to make an appointment with me to discuss how a resolution might be achieved.

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE LETTER 2

(Ref: charging for an 'Optional Extra')

Dear Parent,

Example: Visit to Theatre

It is intended to arrange a visit to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx on xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(date) for a performance of xxxxx commencing at x.xx p.m. the journey will be by coach, leaving the school at x.xx p.m. Return to school is expected to be about x.xx p.m.

As the major part of the journey is outside of school hours and the activity is not directly related to the children's curriculum or an examination for which they are being entered, there will be a charge for the visit amounting to £xx per head. This includes the cost of xxxxxxxxx

Participation in the visit is voluntary. Those pupils choosing not to take part will follow a normal timetable until the end of the school day as normal.

If any pupil/student wishes to take part in the trip, but current circumstances make it difficult to meet the charge, please do not hesitate to contact me in the confidence to discuss whether it is possible to reach some mutual arrangement.

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE LETTER 3

(Ref: requesting 'Voluntary Contributions' for a residential Educational Visit)

Dear Parent

Residential Visit

We are proposing to arrange a residential trip to xxxxxxx next summer for Year x pupils. The dates planned are xxxx to xxxxxx inclusive, and the children will stay at xxxxx (name of hotel/establishment).

The purpose of the trip is to enhance the curriculum for the children/students and they will benefit (*give brief details of educational opportunities and benefits*).

The total cost of this trip per pupil will be £xxx which includes an element for board and lodging which is chargeable to parents.

The cost of board and lodging will be £xxx, which includes breakfast, packed lunch and dinner. Payment of a £xxx deposit is required by dd/mm, with the balance being paid by dd/mm, either in a lump sum or in instalments as agreed with the leader of the visit.

If a family is in receipt of benefits which mean that your child is eligible for a free school meal, the school is obliged by law to waive the charges for board and lodging. A list of benefits applicable is set out in the school's charging policy, which is available on the school website www.tabinfant.org.uk or the school office, together with a free school meal eligibility form. If you wish to speak to me in confidence about the entitlement to waive charges, please do not hesitate to contact me to arrange an appointment.

All other costs, including transport, will be £xxx, and parents / carers are being asked to make a voluntary contribution for all or part of this amount. Parents / carers are not obliged to make a contribution, but it is probable that if insufficient monies are received, the visit may well have to be cancelled.

If there are exceptional cases of hardship, then please contact Mrs Dingwall to discuss the matter in confidence.

Further details of the visit will be sent at a later date.

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE LETTER 4

(Ref: Requesting voluntary contributions for an Educational Visit)

DATE

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re Visit to xxxxx

It is intended to arrange a visit for Year x to xxxxxxxx on dd/mm. The journey will be by xxxxx, leaving at x.xx am. Arrival back at school will be at about x.xx pm.

We will provide a packed lunch for all children so please DO NOT send one into school on that day.

You are invited to make a voluntary contribution of £xxx to cover the cost of the xxxxxxxx. Although the contribution is voluntary, I do need to point out that it is probable that the visit could not take place unless all parents, who are able, are willing to contribute.

I appreciate that some families might find it particularly difficult to contribute all or part of the suggested sum, and if you feel that you are in such a position, please do not hesitate to contact me in confidence to discuss whether some suitable arrangements can be made to cover the cost of your child's participation.

I also need to stress that if a family were unable to contribute, and the visit were still to go ahead, no pupil for whom the trip is intended will be disadvantaged and be excluded from the activity.

Yours sincerely