



ST ALBAN'S CE (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Inspired to make a difference in God's world with excellence and love"

Charging Policy & Debt Recovery Procedures

DOCUMENT INFORMATION			
Reviewed by: Resources Committee			
Last Review:	Spring 2023	Next Review:	Spring 2026
Review Cycle:	3 yearly		

During the course of a year we will endeavour to provide opportunities to enrich all areas of the curriculum and to add breadth and experience to children's learning. For example, theatre groups, cooking activities, visits to places of worship, musical events, experts and speakers. We believe that giving children first hand experiences enhances their education. In order to be able to provide these opportunities we rely on parental support by asking for contributions towards the cost.

We believe that all of our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits independent of their parents' financial means. We will do our best to provide a good range of visits and activities for all pupils and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of these opportunities.

The school's charging policy is in line with the regulations set out in the 1996 Education Act. This allows the school to make a charge for board and lodging on residential visits, costs associated with individual or group musical tuition and activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours.

Charges

Charges, rather than 'voluntary contributions', will be made for the following areas of activity:

1. Board and lodging on residential visits.
2. Costs associated with individual/small group tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school activities, unless it is required by the National Curriculum.
3. Activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours (less than 50% taking place in school time) and are not required to fulfil statutory duties related to the National Curriculum or to Religious Education. The school day is defined as 8.55am to 3.30pm.

Voluntary contributions

Contributions may be requested for any area of the curriculum where there has been an enrichment activity provided that has incurred a cost to the school. For example class visits, theatre visits to and by school, cooking and design where the finished product is taken home etc.

Requests for such contributions will be made to the parents/carers by letter at the time of the activity and state the voluntary nature of the contribution. Parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who do. However, some activities and educational visits will not take place should insufficient contributions be received (less than 80% of the total cost). In these instances the school will seek to find an alternative (but this may not be an experience as meaningful or inspiring as that originally planned).

Exceptions

For activities that take place during the school day, forming part of the National Curriculum, support is available towards part or all the cost of an activity where there are financial difficulties (at the discretion of the Headteacher). In these instances the parent needs to write in confidence to the Headteacher.

Calculating charges

When charges are made by the school for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on the parents who can pay to support those who cannot pay.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

Other charges

The Governing Body has determined:

1. To charge fees, in accordance with relevant regulations, in respect of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act.
2. Outside agencies which are profit-making organisations will be charged a fee to hire the school. Reduced hire rates (of between 25– 50%) may be negotiated with the Headteacher in the case of hirers who the school considers provide additional and desirable enrichment opportunities for the pupils of this school, and for whom costs charged to parents provide 'best value'. Details of condition of hire and charging are detailed in the hirer agreement. Any reduced rate that is greater than 50% must be agreed by the Governors' Resources Committee.

Extra curricular clubs

Clubs run by school staff: a charge may be levied for participation in extra-curricular activities to meet the costs of materials as needed.

Clubs run by coaches or specialist teachers (not directly employed by the school) and managed by the school: a charge will normally be levied for participation in these extra-curricular activities to meet the costs of specialist teaching/coaching. In some cases the school will subsidise the cost of these clubs. Payments will be made directly to the school for these clubs.

Clubs run by outside agencies: where clubs are run by outside agencies a cost will usually apply. The school will endeavour to select outside agencies that offer best value to parents. In these cases payment will be made direct to the agency involved and not to the school.

Damage to property and breakages

The Governing Body may ask parents to pay the cost of breakages or damage, for example a broken window, where this was caused by the child's poor behaviour. A lost library book should be replaced by the parent or child with a book of a similar cost.

Other considerations

If a child does not attend an activity for which a payment or contribution has been made due to absence, refunds will only be given if the school has not incurred a charge.

Residential visits require a non-refundable initial deposit to secure a place. If a parent decides to withdraw their child from the visit, and further payments have been made, these will only be refundable if the school are able to fill the place.

The school will only consider requests for refunds that are requested within 6 months of a payment being made.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Governor Resources Committee will monitor the impact of this policy.

St Alban's CE Aided Primary School

Debt Recovery Procedures

St Alban's CE Aided Primary School may experience bad debts and therefore controls need to be in place to ensure that monies are recovered as soon as possible and further debt is not allowed to accrue.

All staff involved in the debt recovery process should be aware of the following procedures:

Debt recovery procedures

In order to prevent further debt accruing:

- All payments for school lunches (provided by HC3S) should be made on a Monday for all lunches to be ordered that week. The school does not operate a system of 'credit'.
- Lunches will not be ordered if there is a lunch debt owed of £10 or more and parents will be informed that they will need to provide a packed lunch for their child until this debt is paid. Any payments made will be used to clear the debt, after which further lunches may be ordered.
- All monies owing/invoices should be paid by the deadline given.
- The school will send a reminder, if the debt is still outstanding, 7 days after it arose, a second reminder 7 days later and a final demand 14 days after the second reminder.
- If the debt is material (i.e. over £50) then other funded services provided by the school will cease until the debt is paid in full.
- Invoices for Hampshire Music Service individual/small group lessons must be paid by the deadline given. If not paid, reminders will be sent as detailed above. However, due to the high cost of this tuition, pupils will not be able to attend lessons if the debt is not paid within 3 weeks of the invoice being sent and their place will be offered to pupils on the waiting list.
- If action taken by the school to recover the debt is not successful and the debt is material (i.e. over £50) then it can be referred to County Treasurer's Debtors Group where appropriate action can be taken. However, according to the Scheme for Financial Management in Schools:

'Headteachers may write-off any amount of income due up to a maximum of £200 if they consider it is irretrievable, and must sign an explanatory record giving reasons for the write-offs. Records must be kept for inspection.' It is therefore at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether to write off debts up to £200. In accordance with the Scheme for Financial Management in Schools the Governing Body can approve the write-off of debts up to £1000. The finance officer at the school must ensure that appropriate accounting adjustments are made following write-off action.