



**ST MARGARET'S  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ACADEMY**



*“Achievement by faith and work”*

*‘Inspired by the knowledge and love of God  
we all come together to learn  
in a Christian community where we are valued  
for who we are and who we could become’*

**(School Mission Statement)**

**POLICY ON A2: CHARGING AND REMISSION**

The people responsible for this policy and to whom observations and comments should be made are:

Mr S Brierley	Principal
Mr M D’Arcy	Director of Business and Finance
Mr S Crowe	Chair of Governors

Unless there is a change in legislation this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

This policy was approved at a meeting of the Standing Committee on  
This policy is next due to be reviewed 2024

# St Margaret's Mission and Values

## Mission

Our Academy Mission Statement:

**Inspired by the knowledge and love of God,  
we all come together to learn  
in a Christian community where we are valued  
for who we are and who we could become.**

## Values

As an Academy we have adopted eight Christian values which we feel are the basis of our community.

- A Christian community is a community of faith, and at the heart of faith is **TRUST**. Trust is about letting go – putting ourselves in God's, and in other people's, hands. Jesus told his followers to "*trust in God; trust also in me*"; so as we work together, we expect members of our community to be trustworthy and reliable, and not to let others down.
- Education is not just about academic learning; it is about personal development too. As we work together, we expect that good working relationships, and **FRIENDSHIPS**, will develop, between students as well as between members of staff. In John 15, Jesus explicitly calls his disciples not servants, but friends. As a community, we celebrate the selflessness of friendship.
- **JUSTICE** is another value that is central to our community. Justice is about appreciating that our well-being is inextricably linked to everyone else's. It is not just about our response when someone acts inappropriately; it is also about ensuring that everyone is accorded the dignity and the respect and that is rightfully theirs. Isaiah encouraged us to "*seek justice!*" – and we do.
- From time to time, however, we all get things wrong. Jesus commanded us to show **FORGIVENESS** to each other, and as a Christian community we seek to obey Him. Someone in the wrong should show self-discipline and apologise, making reparation where appropriate; someone who is wronged should accept an apology and not seek to humiliate.
- Education is about far more than chemicals, conjunctions and crotchets! As a community, we seek to foster **WISDOM** and true insight into the way life works – an understanding of the consequences of our thoughts, words and actions and an awareness of the true value of things. Such wisdom is rooted in a proper reverence for God: as the Psalmist puts it, "*the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*".
- St Paul looked back on his life and was able to say that he had "*run the race*" right to the end. All those involved in education need to demonstrate similar levels of **ENDURANCE** – learning is the ultimate life-long task, a marathon not a sprint. By showing patience and resilience we will ensure that no-one is left behind, and that all are able to achieve their God-given potential.
- These values will be all the easier for us if we show **COMPASSION**. Compassion is more than just sympathy: like Jesus, we aim to put ourselves in other people's shoes, understand their point of view, then do something about it – and thus to grow in faith.
- Underpinning all of these, we seek to be a community at **PEACE**. St Paul describes God as the God of peace. We therefore seek to demonstrate harmony, stability and security within our Christian community, downplaying dissent and accentuating the positive.

# **ST MARGARET'S C.E. ACADEMY CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY**

## **Introduction**

The policy of the governors of St Margaret's C.E. Academy is to provide free education for all attending pupils. This policy is implemented within the letter of the law, and also embracing the spirit of it. The governing body has, therefore, set up a charging and remissions policy for certain activities in school. It will be reviewed from time to time and will be no less generous than the LA's policy.

## **Outline**

Where visits are arranged either as an integral part of a particular syllabus or to enhance pupils' learning experience, parents may be asked to contribute towards the cost. However, legislation states that a pupil should not be debarred from a visit if a parent does not wish to contribute. In cases of family hardship, parents may apply, in confidence, to the Principal/Director of Business and Finance for exemption from such contributions. However, we hope that parents will realise that there comes a point when a trip is not viable if sufficient contributions are not forthcoming.

There may be occasions when an organisation other than the LA or the school governing body arranges an activity during school hours, and parents want their children to take part. Such organisations may charge parents for the services provided, but permission for children's absence must be sought from the school. In the case of a pupil being absent for an annual holiday, the school needs to authorise the absence. Parents are asked to keep such requests to a minimum. No more than ten days may be authorised in a school year.

We believe that a school should give pupils as many varied learning experiences as possible and we shall do our utmost to ensure that all our pupils have the opportunity to benefit from such experiences. For other activities such as music tuition, field trips, concert and theatre visits the table below indicates the charges that will be made. It also covers charges related to examination fees in specific cases.

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying charges.

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Any support under part 6 of the Immigrations and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that working Tax Credit is not also received, or the family's income as assessed by HM Customs and Revenue does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Customs rules for that financial year
- The guarantee of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on October 27th 2008

Activity	Comment
Individual Instrumental music tuition that is over and above the National Curriculum, and/or an approved examination syllabus.	A charge will be made per lesson. This will be reviewed when the charges made to the school by the Music Service increase or the payment for the deployment of teachers increases. Parents in receipt of certain benefits could be eligible for a reduction of fees.
Transport to Work Experience	Parents will pay directly (except statemented pupils where the statement refers to transport).
Activities outside school time not related to statutory duties.	Charges will be levied.
Board and lodging on residential visits.	Parents are to be charged. Except in cases of statutory remission where families receive benefits.
Re-scrutiny of exam results.	Parents to pay all charges.
Exam entry for prescribed exam for which pupils have not been prepared by school	Parents to pay all charges.
Entry for an exam which is not on prescribed list where preparation takes place outside school hours.	A charge will be made.
Recovery of wasted exam fees.	Parents to be charged.
Educational visits and field trips.	Parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution. This must not excessively exceed the cost of the visit
School Transport-SMA's Mini-bus	SMA vehicles have Section 19 Permits and therefore charges can be made to cover permissible costs under the regulations
Hardship	No pupil will be left out of any activity because Parents/Carers cannot or will not make a contribution. The school provides a small hardship fund which is able to assist to a degree parents in such circumstances

## **BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE TO THE CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY**

### **Introduction**

The education provided by any maintained school must be free and this includes materials, equipment and any transport that is needed to take pupils from the school to the activity such as to the local swimming pool for swimming lessons. Under the charging provisions of the Education Act 1996, governing bodies of maintained schools may choose to charge for certain defined activities, but can only do this if they have first drawn up a statement of their charging and remissions policy.

If they choose to charge parents for the board and lodging costs of a residential visit, and if the education provided on that visit must otherwise be provided free under the terms of the Education Act 1996, they must, as a minimum, remit the board and lodging cost for pupils whose parents are in receipt of income support, family credit, or disability working allowance. For example, if the work done on a field trip were part of the GCSE examination syllabus, parents on income support would not have to pay the board and lodging cost for their children. Otherwise, remission, like charging, is at the discretion of the Governors. However, it is likely that any reduction in remission beyond that which the LA would pay would be seen as unfair.

In respect of charges for music tuition, the Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007.

### **Charging Policies**

The governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy on charging. The governing body's policy may be more or less generous than that of the LA, as long as it meets the requirements of the law. A policy statement will 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 need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). Parents have a right to ask for this information, and a summary must be included in the prospectus published by the school.

If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund-raising, and not by charging the paying pupils more.

The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity, but only if those teachers have been given a separate contract to provide the optional extra. A contract need not be a formal document. It could be a simple letter to a teacher asking him or her to provide a service on a particular occasion.

When drawing up their statements, governing bodies should remember that charging is only permissible for the following areas of activity:

- board and lodging on residential visits;
- costs associated with individual tuition, and tuition in groups, in the playing of musical instruments, including vocal tuition, out of school hours (unless it is provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum);

- activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and which are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education;
- the cost of entering a pupil for a public examination, not prescribed in regulations, and for preparing the pupil for such an examination outside school hours;
- re-sits of prescribed public examinations when no further preparation has been provided by the school;
- optional extras.

## **Schools Hours**

Parents must be informed of the days, and the hours of those days, that the school their children are attending is in session.

School "hours" mean when the school is in session and does not include breaks or INSET days. A school should provide a minimum of two sessions per day, each of two hours, giving a minimum of twenty hours per week. However, as a general guide to good practice, the Secretary of State has adopted the Office of Standards in Education's (OfSTED) advice on the following minimum hours per week:

- 21 hours for pupils aged 5 to 7
- 23 ½ hours for pupils aged 7 to 10
- 24 hours for pupils aged 11 to 13
- 25 hours for pupils aged 14 to 16

These hours do not include collective worship, registration or break times. As far as the number of days is concerned, a school must provide 190 days of two sessions or 380 half days of a single session - each session being a minimum of two hours as already stated.

## **Music Tuition**

The new charging regulations for music tuition during the school day, The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, (<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/stat.htm>) came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007. These regulations provide for the charging of tuition in groups of any appropriate size and allow charging for vocal tuition. Charges for tuition fees are reviewed annually and have a direct relationship to the overall hourly rate for the Peripatetic teachers.

## **Other Activities During School Hours**

In addition to music tuition, non-school organisations may be asked by a school to arrange an activity to take place during school hours and such organisations may charge parents where parents want their children to join the particular activity, such as an outside theatre group. While schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they can still ask parents to make voluntary contributions to help school funds go further where this is the source of funding. While it is legitimate for the school to say a particular activity cannot take place if sufficient voluntary funding is not forthcoming, no pupil may be left out of such an activity because her or his parents cannot or will not make a contribution.

Also a non-school organisation may arrange an activity to take place during school hours and parents want their children to join the activity. Such organisations may charge parents. But parents must then ask the school to agree to their children being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take their children out of school for a family holiday. The head teacher and governing body must decide whether this is in the pupils' best interest. They must also bear in mind the requirements of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations that a pupil should not be allowed more than two weeks' absence in any year unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **Public Examinations**

No charges may be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in regulations. The governing body must enter a pupil for each examination in a public examination syllabus that the school has prepared the pupil for. This does not need to apply if the governing body think there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil, or if the pupil's parents ask, in writing, that the pupil should not be entered. The LA may not override the governing body's decision on whether to enter a particular pupil for an examination.

An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
- a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Charges may not be made for any cost associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. But charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in regulations.

## **Within or Outside School Hours**

For an activity to be considered wholly or mainly outside school hours, the bulk of the time spent on the activity must lie outside normal school hours. For example, if a group of pupils was going to a musical concert and had to leave mid-morning and arrive back an hour after school normally finished, such a visit would count as within school hours. On the other hand, if pupils had to leave mid-afternoon and arrived back in the late evening, such a visit would count as taking place outside school-time and charges could then be made.

Governing bodies should take care that where a charge is made it only covers the actual cost and the cost of teachers supervising the activity. If funds are needed to help with hardship cases, these must be through voluntary contributions or from any hardship fund set up by the school and/or the Parents' Association not by an added charge to other parents. Where the cost covers supervisory teachers, such teachers should have a contract that indicates this work is an optional extra.

## **Residential Activities**

Residential activities are treated in a similar way to educational activities that take place wholly or partly outside school hours. A residential trip counts as falling within school-time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts to at least 50% of the

number of half days taken up by the activity. Bearing in mind that the school day is divided into two sessions and that each 24 hour period is divided into two half days beginning at noon and at midnight, a trip taking place during the term that begins on Wednesday at 8.30 am and finishes on Saturday evening at 9 p.m. would count as 8 half days. Of these 8 half days, 6 half days count as school sessions, so this trip would be taken as happening in school-time. On the other hand, a trip starting at 8.30 am on Friday and finishing at noon on Sunday would count as 5 half days of which 2 would be counted as school sessions. This trip would therefore be considered as taking place outside school-time and could be charged for in total, including board and lodging.

For a residential trip taking place largely during school-time, or that is essential to the curriculum provided by the school, no charge can be made for the education element or the cost of travel. Charges can be made for board and lodging, but it must be remembered that in all cases this can only be done for parents who are not receiving income support, family credit, or disability working allowance.

### **The School Mini-Bus**

Where a school runs a mini-bus, only the school's pupils, staff or parents may travel at a charge. However, schools can only charge if they have a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985, which exempts them from the Public Service Vehicle Operator and Driver Licensing Conditions. If no charge is made a school does not require a permit, but a permit is required for each mini-bus that a school owns if they are making a charge. Charges may recover some or all of the running costs of the vehicle (including depreciation) but such a service cannot make a profit either directly or indirectly.

### **Voluntary Contributions**

Although schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind) to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. Schools should also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently. If a particular activity for pupils cannot take place without some financial help from parents that should be explained to parents at the planning stage. The essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. The school must first decide which class or group of pupils is to benefit from the activity and then look for voluntary contributions, either for that activity or by general fund-raising.

### **ParentPay/ParentMail**

St Margaret's has chosen to use ParentPay/ParentMail for payment for school trips, visits and resources. Where parents or carers do not wish to use the online system, the school can make arrangements to accept cash or cheques upon request. The advantage of taking electronic payments this way benefits the administration of the payments into the school bank account and reduces the risk of loss and fraud of cash transactions and supporting parents not relying at times on students to carry large amounts of cash. The academy is charged for each transaction made through ParentPay – these transaction charges are recovered in any costing for the trip, activity or resource.



## **Remission of Fees and Costs**

Where parents receive the following support they are exempted from charges as indicated:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Any support under part 6 of the Immigrations and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that working Tax Credit is not also received, or the family's income as assessed by HM Customs and Revenue does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Customs rules for that financial year
- The guarantee of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on October 27th 2008

Such parents must have board and lodging costs remitted to them if the trip takes place mainly during school hours. Fees for residential trips (rather than the cost of board and lodging) may not be charged to such parents, even if the trip is outside school hours, but forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination (e.g. GCSE) or is part of the National Curriculum or the syllabus for religious education.

## **Other Relevant Policies and Procedures**

- Home-school agreements
- School prospectus
- Family support information
- Parents and Teachers Associations
- Attendance policy