

	John Mason School Charging Policy			
	Applicable to:	Responsible Officer	Date Adopted:	Date to be Reviewed:
	All Staff	Headteacher	June 2014	May 2017

Charging Policy

Introduction

In this policy any reference to the Governors of John Mason School or Trustees of John Mason Academy Trust is a reference to The Board of Directors of John Mason Academy Trust (JMAT) and any reference to the Headteacher of John Mason School is a reference to the Chief Executive Officer of JMAT.

Background

John Mason School believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions 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 students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the end of the document.

1. The policy identifies activities for which:

- **voluntary contributions may be requested**
- **charges will not be made.**
- **charges will be made**
- **charges may be waived**

2. Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law says:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay.

If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

3. No charges will be made for

1. Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
2. Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
3. Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
4. Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school*;
5. Examination re-sit(s)* if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school;
6. Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
7. Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours
 - a. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - b. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or
 - c. part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
8. Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip;
9. Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

* If a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

4. Activities for which charges may be made

a) Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 3 above) which take place outside school hours but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours). (See Section 9)

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time, However students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs.

Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 3 above).

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or appropriate sized groups of pupils to play a musical instrument or to sing and which is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus for all pupils.

When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. This should recognise that parents may not be able to pay quickly and may have to budget for the trip over a reasonable period of time.

5. Optional Extras

Is a residential trip in or out of school time?

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Charges may be made for optional activities that are known as 'Optional Extras'. Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost (per pupil) of provision.

It is the policy of John Mason School that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Examples of optional activities/charges	Additional Information	Remission Availability
Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, <i>where a parent wishes their child to own them;</i>	E.g. A clay model – a charge to cover the cost of the clay.	Families in Category A may receive support if funds are available. Please apply in confidence to the Business Manager.
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or appropriate groups of students	Families in Category A may receive support if funds are available. Please apply in confidence to the Business Manager.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The charge will not exceed the actual cost 	Families in Category A may receive support if funds are available. Please apply in confidence to the Business Manager.

6. Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived.

7. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges.

If remission or help is available in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table above. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below.

Category A

Parents in receipt of

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

8. Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

9. Payment for damage to property

The Governors believe that students need to learn to be responsible for their actions. If their actions lead to damage of school property, or personal property belonging to another student, member of staff or visitor to the school, they will be expected to pay for the damage.

Parents are expected to explain to their children the importance of this policy and the inevitability of payment should damage be caused by deliberate intent, neglect, carelessness or the failure to obey instructions of a member of staff. Replacement is usually an immediate priority to the school. Therefore the Governors will expect parents to pay the money owing immediately. The cost over a longer period of time would be expected, in most cases, to be borne by the student but the responsibility of removing pocket money or charging students from their part time job remains that of parents.

The Governors reserve the right to refer matters to the police if appropriate. Should the

Governors fail to receive money owed, they will consider other sanctions.

Parents and staff will need to make students aware of the importance of respect for property and of the real value which the community has contributed to equipping and maintaining its schools.

Review of this policy

The Board of Directors through its Finance, Premises & Personnel Committee will review this policy every three years. It may however review this policy earlier than this if the government produces new regulations, or if it receives recommendations on how this policy might be improved.

Appendix

Charging policy: Summary for parents

At John Mason school we want 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.

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.

The full, detailed, policy is available for inspection in the school office.

Voluntary contributions

We cannot charge for activities which are part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum but we can ask for voluntary contributions.

Examples of circumstances in which we might ask for voluntary contributions include:

- Transport to swimming sessions
- Transport on trips
- Admission charges

Why do we need to ask for voluntary contributions?

We want to offer a wide range of activities to broaden your child's experience but we can't afford to do everything we would wish without help from parents.

What happens if I am unwilling to pay?

Your contribution is voluntary. Your child will not be excluded from the activity

BUT if we do not receive enough voluntary contributions we may have to cancel the activity.

What happens if I am unable to pay?

Parents in certain financial circumstances (see below) will not be expected to make voluntary contributions

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

No. The amount we ask in voluntary contribution must not exceed the actual cost of the activity per pupil.

We promise that:

We will tell you at the outset if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions.

We shall give as much notice as possible of any activities which will require voluntary contributions.

We can charge for optional extras

We can charge for any materials, books, instruments or equipment if you wish your child to own them.

This means that we will make a charge for:

- Materials used in technology if your child is expecting to bring the finished product home
- Cookery ingredients if your child will bring the result home
- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum and outside the school day e.g. some theatre trips, football matches, music concerts
- After school clubs

We can charge for music tuition if it is not required as part of the National Curriculum and is provided for an individual pupil or for appropriate sized groups of pupils.

We promise that:

The charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra.

We will obtain your agreement before we provide the optional extra.

Charging for residential visits

We believe that every child has an entitlement to a residential visit during their time at John Mason school. This will be built into the school curriculum.

We can't charge for transport although we shall usually need to request voluntary contributions.

We may charge for board and lodging (unless parents are in receipt of one or more of the benefits listed at the end of this guide). The charge will not exceed the actual cost.

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
- publishing a fair, objective and transparent procedure for allocating places in case of over-subscription (we shall avoid 'first come, first served' payment which may favour some pupils more).

Special financial arrangements

Parents who are in receipt of any of the benefits listed below will not be required to pay for

- Board and lodging on residential visits (not optional)
- Technology materials
- Music tuition
- Transport to out of school activities

In addition, reduced rates may be negotiated for:

- Extra-curricular activities
- Skiing trips

Benefits required to qualify

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) does not exceed the limit for that year.
- Guaranteed State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on'

*These figures and other criteria for FSM may change. The school will adopt criteria that apply.