



# CHARGING POLICY

**Mount St Mary's Catholic High School Charging Policy**

Adopted by Mount St Marys' Governing Body on 20 September 2022

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe R. P.', is written over a horizontal line.

Chair of Governors

Review date: 20 September 2025

This policy has been written in accordance with sections 457 of the Education Act 1996; Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999; Education (Residential Trips) (Prescribed Tax Credits) (England) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/381; The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended).

The aim is to clarify Mount St Mary's Catholic High School's (MSM) position with regard to charging and remission for school activities and visits. We confirm that MSM will meet the costs of any activity or visit that might be essential to curriculum delivery and hence the learning of our students.

Likewise, if the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening) and MSM will bear all costs except board and lodging. 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.

Where the activity or visit occurs outside the normal MSM hours, is not essential to curriculum delivery and hence the learning of our students, MSM may request full payment or a voluntary contribution to the cost from parents/carers. In the case of the latter, no student would ever be excluded from participating in the activity or visit if where a voluntary contribution was requested one could not be made, however, if insufficient voluntary contributions are made the activity or visit may not be financially viable.

### **Charging full cost**

Any charges made must not exceed the actual total cost of the activity or visit divided by the number of participating students; there will be no inclusion of subsidy for any students wishing to participate but whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the activity or visit occurs during school hours, any cost of alternative provision for non-participating students must be met wholly by MSM.

Participating MSM staff will be in attendance on a voluntary basis only. However, the cost of any staff engaged to provide services associated with the optional extra will be included in the overall cost of the activity or visit.

No charges will be made in respect of any student who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Charges will be levied for:

1. **Residential visits** - board and lodging, irrespective of whether or not the residential occurs in more than 50% of school hours. The dates of any residential will be publicised at least 10 days before the dates of the actual visit. Flexible payment schemes will be available.
2. **Activities and visits (Optional Extras)** – activities and visits not essential to the delivery of the curriculum and relating to public examinations, and occurring outside normal school hours or part of religious education.
3. **Books and equipment** – replacement of lost, damaged or defaced items. Equipment or materials that parents/carers or the student wish to have ownership of at any time before, during or after use.
4. **Public examinations** – (please refer to the MSM Examinations Policy).
5. **Agreement to pay** – consent forms for any of the above will include an "agreement to pay" signature from parents/carers. Should payment not be received within 30 days of signing a reminder will be issued. Failure to pay within 14 days of the reminder being issued may result in recovery of the debt.

## **Voluntary contribution to costs requests**

- MSM, as a grant maintained school, is entitled to request voluntary contributions for any activity it wishes to.
- Requests for voluntary contributions to costs at MSM will always include an advised voluntary contribution figure.
- Any student wishing to participate whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution will never be excluded from participation in the activity or visit that is happening.
- On occasions where voluntary contributions to costs are requested, MSM will always state clearly that an activity or visit may not be financially viable if insufficient voluntary contributions are made.

## **Transport**

MSM **cannot** charge for:

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the school; or
- Transport provided in connection with curriculum based visits.

## **Peripatetic Music Lessons**

Currently, MSM only offers peripatetic music lessons to BTEC Performing Arts students. They are accessed by Performing Arts students in small groups where each group is a band focussing on technique, ensemble and listening skills. It is to develop and enhance their BTEC and Curriculum study. There is also a rolling programme where pupils from year 7 and 8 who wish to have lessons and have shown a commitment to extracurricular Performing Arts events can also be part of the groups.

## **Refunds**

1. Deposits for activities and visits are non-refundable and this will always be clearly stated on information about the activities and visits.
2. Cancellation by school – all payments received will be refunded in full.
3. Illness preventing day-trip participation – refunds are unlikely as tickets of varying kinds will have been purchased ahead of the visit. However, if a replacement student can be found or there is a contingency fund for the trip a refund will be forthcoming.
4. Illness preventing residential visit participation – the trip insurance should cover the cost of the refund for non-attendance due to injury or illness but in order to do so, MSM require proof of injury or illness in the form of an official medical letter or report; however, individual policy exceptions may apply.

## **Experiencing financial difficulties**

Requests for financial assistance for other activities or visits, or special payment arrangements, should be made in writing to the Headteacher upon receipt of the letter outlining the detail of the activity or visit or once the parents/carers are aware of the details and their inability to meet the financial requirements associated.

- The Headteacher **may be able** to agree flexible, extended payments or some sort of repayment scheme to the school for bearing the full costs initially.
- All applications/cases will be considered individually and in complete confidence, however, due to budgetary financial constraints, MSM has minimal surplus funds to support such cases but will always explore all opportunities.