

THORNBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHARGING POLICY

1. Objectives of the charging provisions of the Educational Reform Act
 - a) to maintain the right to free school education
 - b) to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly to pupils during normal teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parent's ability to pay.
 - c) to confirm the right to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or in support of an activity, whether during or outside school hours.

2. Education wholly or mainly outside school hours:
No charges may be made where the education is provided:
 - a) to fulfil syllabus requirements of a prescribed public examination.
 - b) to fulfil requirements of the National Curriculum.
 - c) to fulfil requirements for religious education.

3. Music
There is a charge for instrumental music lessons given out of school hours.
The School will occasionally be able to remit charges for activities provided by a range of instrumental Music Teachers where parents are in receipt of Family Credit or Income Support and the child shows particular aptitude.
Lessons currently provided by a range of instrumental music services will be charged for.
Where the school can provide music as part of the curriculum, using external providers, there will be no charge, other than for the provision of individual equipment sundries such as clarinet reeds.

4. Equipment
Neither parents nor pupils may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials (e.g. pens, folders or dictionaries) for educational use during school hours.
However:-
 - i) Parents can be invited to provide voluntarily:- writing instruments, rough notebooks, smocks for art, craftwork, and chemistry, and games clothes.
 - ii) Parents may be encouraged to purchase voluntarily a musical instrument when their child becomes reasonably proficient. The school will provide details of organisations offering hire purchase for instruments.

5. Activities and Visits during school hours:
 - i) Short visits: no compulsory charge may be made for any visit or activity wholly or mainly within the school day. These will take place on the basis of there being sufficient voluntary contributions from parents to make the activity viable when any element of support from the school has been taken into account.

 - ii) Composition of Parties: If the number of places for an activity is limited, the selection of pupils to participate will be without reference to the parents' willingness or ability to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost.

 - iii) Long visits:
 - a) If a body other than the school or LEA arranges an activity and parents ask for leave of absence for their children, that body may levy the charges directly on the parents. Staff members released for the activity, and parents, would need to satisfy themselves and the Governors about the adequacy of the arrangements being made, and about appropriate insurance cover being provided.

- b) Where the school arranges the visit it will normally be on the basis of voluntary funding. The level of funding required if the activity is to take place would be indicated, and also that the activity would not take place if the funding is not forthcoming.
Support may be given to the cost of such visits from school funds.
- c) As part of enrichment activities such as cooking, a donation may be requested towards costs e.g. ingredients.

6. Activities and Visits outside school hours:

- i) Participation: for an 'Optional Extra' this will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges involved.
- ii) Compulsory charges: These may not exceed the actual cost for a particular pupil, and may not include a subsidy for any other pupil.

Charges can include - travel, board and lodging, materials and equipment, non-teaching staff costs, entrance fees, insurance.

Charges may also cover the expenses of teaching staff specifically engaged for the activity.

Teachers can be so engaged by a simple document inviting the provision of services in return for payment for expenses.

7. Voluntary contributions:

The school may seek voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any school activity whether during or outside school hours.

There is not a limit to the level of voluntary contributions, nor is there any restriction on the use made of such contributions.

Parents must be told -

- that there is no obligation to contribute
- that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents make a contribution.

8. Remission and Support:

Wherever charges are made or voluntary contributions are sought, the school will be willing to consider any request, either for remission of charges, or for assistance towards the cost of an optional extra, in the interest of enabling as many pupils as possible to participate in worthwhile activities.

Reviewed by the Finance and Personnel Committee May 2009