August 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians

**CHARGES FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced changes to the law relating to charges for educational activities. The Act emphasises the principle that education should be free of charge if it takes place during school hours, and makes specific mention of those activities for which a charge may not now be made. These include:

- Admission to an LEA school.
- Books, materials, instruments or equipment, protective clothing.
- Travel between parts of school premises.
- Materials, ingredients, equipment for practical subjects.
- Public examination entry.

Charges may be levied for activities which take place outside school hours. Such charges might include:

- Pupils’ board and lodging costs for residential visits.
- Materials required for such visits.
- Entrance fees for museums, theatres, castles.
- Travel.
- Insurance costs.
- Teaching costs where staff have been engaged on a specific contract for the occasion.

A charge may also be levied for tuition in playing a musical instrument.

It is my responsibility to obtain your agreement in advance for your child’s participation in any activity for which a charge is to be made.

It is clear that these changes would create difficulties for our school and might limit the wide range of educational experiences which have been available to all our pupils. Two areas where charges have been made in the past are of particular concern:

1. **Practical Subjects.** For many years, parents have happily supported the teaching of Technology by contributing significantly to the cost of materials. Letters will be sent later in the year to give more details of the courses on offer.
2. Educational Excursions. The school is committed to making the curriculum more relevant and to enriching the classroom studies of the pupils with first hand experience. Hence, the number of short, educational visits has increased, invariably supported by parental payments.

The 1988 Act does not envisage the end of such activities nor any narrowing of educational experience. Schools may now replace previous policies with an invitation to parents to make a voluntary contribution in support of any educational activity. Such requests will be put to you from time to time as appropriate activities are planned. I must make it clear to you, however that -

(i) There will be no obligation to contribute.
(ii) Pupils will not be treated differently whether or not their parents have made a voluntary contribution, but
(iii) If an overwhelming majority of parents do not contribute, it might well be necessary to cancel an activity. No parent will be asked to subsidise a child from another family.

I am sure that with your continued support we can continue to proceed with no reduction in overall educational provision. You will realise that this is quite a complex, wide-ranging issue, and that I have referred only to some of the detail of the regulations. If you wish for clarification, or would like to discuss the matter with me, please do not hesitate to get in touch at your earliest convenience.

With Best Wishes

Mr M Gamble
Head of School