



## SIPS Music and Arts Service Remission and Charging Policy

### Purpose of document

A key objective of the Music Education Hub grant provided to SIPS Education by the DfE is to help assist in the removal of barriers to learning and making progress for young musicians.

As such, this policy has been created to help parents and carers support their children's engagement and progress in music across a whole range of activities provided by SIPS Music and Arts Service Sandwell.

### Sandwell Context

Sandwell is ranked 12th in the most deprived Local Authorities out of the 317 in England (IoD, 2019, Rank of Average Score). It is an ethnically diverse Borough with 57.1% of school children from minority ethnic groups.

The Public Health England (PHE) Child Health Profile (March 2020) stated the Health and Wellbeing of children in Sandwell is worse than England particularly in terms of infant mortality, teenage pregnancy, and child obesity. 25.5% of children aged 16 years were living in poverty (2016), 2.7% of school pupils had social, emotional, and mental health needs (2018) and 4.3% of young people aged 16 to 18 were not in education, employment, and training. Sandwell is a high crime/low-income area but with higher-than-expected employment, however this employment is mainly minimum wage jobs, part time roles. 24% of children attending school are eligible for free school meals.

The diversity of the population needs to be considered when planning and engaging with children and young people. This diversity interfaces with other social, cultural and environmental factors which all need to be taken into account for methods of communication and engagement.

Put simply, without the Music Education Hub providing many of its services subsidised or free for schools, many children would simply be unable to afford to access high-quality, specialist, music education.

## Out of School hours Music groups in Sandwell

SIPS Music and Arts Service have 19 Music groups across Sandwell.

<https://sandwellmusic.org/ensembles/ensembles-list/>

**SIPS Community Bands/Choirs** are free of charge and open to all musicians in the community. Register interest by visiting

<https://sandwellmusic.org/ensembles/communitybands/>

Who can attend?

- Pupils at school learning to play an instrument in WCIT
- Pupils receiving instrumental/vocal lessons
- Parents, carers and teachers who previously played an instrument, maybe still own their own an instrument and have an interest in playing again.

**Band Together at Splinter Studio** free of charge and open to all musicians in the community. Register interest by visiting <https://sandwellmusic.org/ensembles/ensembles-list/>

Who can attend?

- Pupils with no musical experience to create their own music and to learn to play in a rock band.
- Pupils receiving instrumental/vocal lessons

**Big Top Band/ Creative Sounds Sandwell/Inclusive Choir** free of charge and open to all pupils with additional needs. Register interest by visiting

<https://sandwellmusic.org/ensembles/ensembles-list/>

**Elementary to Youth Ensembles** Register interest by visiting

<https://sandwellmusic.org/ensembles/ensembles-list/>

Who can attend?

Musicians from an elementary to Grade 8 ability level are invited by their music teachers to attend these groups and invited to become a music centre member.

Music Membership Termly fees remain the same as previous years including discount for siblings and 100% fee remission for low-income families. Music Centre membership enables each child to play in as many ensembles as they are eligible to join and as places are available.

Membership is £45.00 per term for a single child, subsequent siblings qualify for 50% sibling discount of £22.50 per term and 100% fee remission is available by application, using the remission form below for low-income families who are in receipt of Pupil Premium/free school meals. We do not wish anyone to be unable to participate due to financial circumstances. Please complete the [Remission Form](#) or contact the Music and Arts Service on 0121 296 2997 or [music.arts@sips.co.uk](mailto:music.arts@sips.co.uk)

**The Friends Of Sandwell Music** continue to enhance music ensemble experiences for families and children at concerts, events and rehearsals. A tuck shop is provided for children to purchase a drink and sweets; much of these items are highly subsidised by the Friends Group. Pupils are provided with a drink, crisp and a chocolate bar if they cannot afford to purchase or have forgotten their money. Refreshment, drinks and food are often provided at many concerts and events free of charge to the musicians and their families.

### **Instrumental and vocal lessons**

SIPS Music and Arts Service works through trading agreements with the Sandwell schools. Schools are charged for services based upon their requests for tuition and other music-making activities.

We operate in this way because schools know their pupils and families best. Schools also receive funding that acknowledges their pupil intake and can make their own judgements on what activities in school are subsidised or provided free for their children to enhance their curriculum.

Schools can charge parents for contributions to fund their music services in school, but they cannot make a surplus on those charges. In Sandwell, typically schools charge between £20 and £65 per term depending on the school's budget. In almost all schools, the school is providing a subsidy for lessons alongside this parental charge.

SIPS Music and Arts service operates a group teaching model in schools. This ensures that when our teachers visit a school, we can teach up to 8-10 children per hour. This ensures that many more children can learn to play an instrument and it helps to reduce the proportion of charges passed on to parents. Parents and Carers of children in receipt of such lessons should refer directly to their child's school remission and charging policy if they feel they are eligible for either a mandatory or discretionary remission of fees.

### **Examinations**

SIPS Music and Arts Service value Grade examinations in a student's musical journey. We have free internal Grade assessments up to Grade 5. Students are issued with a SIPS Music Certificate to mark their achievement. We also organise External Trinity College London Examinations. In April 2022 because of a drop in Trinity exam entries, we introduced a highly subsidised SIPS bursary for these examination costs. Find out about these reduced costs here [Trinity Letter Summer 2022.pdf](#)

### **Loan and purchase of Instruments and other Equipment**

SIPS Music and Arts Service provides a good quality instrument on long-term free loan to all pupils learning with the service. Using funding from its own income generation and Music Hub funding, the service has accumulated a very large stock of instruments. All instruments are maintained and insured against accidental loss and damage at no cost to parents. This removes an essential barrier for our children and families.

### **Concerts, Educational visits and Festivals,**

It is an important part of musical learning for children to experience authentic performances, festivals and tours. SIPS Music and Arts Service provides many opportunities

for children at all levels to experience the joy of these events from school assemblies, local and national venues and events.

Audiences are invited to many of these performances for free, when charges apply subsidies and remissions are applied for family tickets/OAP's and low-income households.

### **Residential/ Tours**

SIPS Music and Arts Service organises overseas concert tour or residential course. Tours are organised by companies that specialise in musical tours for young musicians and include all accommodation, transport and meals as well as providing suitable and rewarding concert venues and excursions.

Full costs of such trips are passed on to parents through payment plans in advance of the trip. In recent years we have surveyed parents in advance of planning any overseas tour to enquire about financial feasibility and to set realistic and proportionate experiences for children.

Assistance with costs is available to support multiple family members or those experiencing financial hardship. Funding to support these children is raised annually by the Friends of Sandwell Music Service

Please contact the SIPS Music and Arts Service office on 0121 2997 [music.arts@sips.co.uk](mailto:music.arts@sips.co.uk) to discuss remission of fees for concert tours and residential stays. All applications for support are managed confidentially by the Head of Music Service.

### **SIPS Music and Arts Service undertakes the following: -**

- To support where possible, requests for financial assistance to support our mission statement, inclusion policy and the educational needs of the children and young people.
- Support for individuals will be restricted to those young people/ musicians between the ages of 5 – 18 who are disadvantaged and who undertake music education activities in schools or centres that is provided or commissioned by SIPS Music and Arts Service.
- In exceptional circumstances, the provision of financial assistance towards the purchase or loan of equipment necessary to facilitate educational needs
- Invite applications for funding informally where it is identified that a pupil will be disadvantaged educationally for an unsound financial reason. These applications will be submitted to the head of service who will take them to a specially convened disbursements group which will consist of SIPS Music Board.  
Should the application be successful the Head of Service will arrange for disbursement ensuring that: The money is spent for the purposes applied for. Ideally by making payments direct to the supplier, teacher, school/college, rather than the individual applicant  
A comprehensive audit trail is kept for all disbursements  
An appropriate agreement is signed with the applicant (or their parents/carers) setting out any conditions which apply to the assistance

- The Friends of SIPS Music and Arts Service will continue to
  - Offer subsidy to pupils in Music Service ensembles for the purposes of undertaking trips and overseas tours.
  - Support scholarships, bursaries, or prizes for such pupils.
  - Support music ensemble purchases of music resources and scores by application and request to the committee

### **Review and Changes to this policy**

Charges made to schools and individuals for activities provided by the SIPS Music and Arts Service are subject to annual review and agreement by elected members of the SIPS Board. All changes to charges are only made where necessary. Any questions or concerns relating to charges and remissions can be sent to [music.arts@sips.co.uk](mailto:music.arts@sips.co.uk)