



## Fee Policy & Procedures

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| <b>Purpose:</b>       | To outline the Policy & relevant Procedures related to the collection of Student recurrent fees; including Fee Concessions.   |  |                  |
| <b>Scope:</b>         | Students, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.  |  |                  |
| <b>Status:</b>        | Authorised  | <b>Supersedes:</b> Version 20200120      |                  |
| <b>Authorised by:</b> | School Principal  | <b>Policy Owner:</b>                     | School Principal |
|                       |   | <b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 13.11.2020 |                  |
| <b>References:</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule of Fees</li> <li>• Fee Concession Application Form</li> <li>• Enrolment Contract</li> </ul>   |  |                  |
| <b>Review Date:</b>   | Two yearly  | <b>Next Review Date:</b> Nov 2021        |                  |
| <b>Definitions:</b>   | <p><b>Class Fees:</b> A collective that covers the recurring Termly billed fees for each student.</p> <p><b>Fee Concession:</b> A discount by application and approval, due to financial hardship reasons.</p> <p><b>FACTS:</b> FACTS Tuition Management is the software used by Birali to manage family school fee accounts. FACTS provides parents on-demand viewing of their account with charges and payments made. FACTS also allows for payment plans to be arranged on a Direct Debit arrangement.</p> <p><b>PCSchool:</b> The software used by Birali to maintain a database of staff, students and parents/carers; including financial transactions.</p> |  |                  |

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### Background

Moreton Bay Birali Steiner School Association Inc. is a not-for-profit association trading as Birali Steiner School and all School fees and levies are used for your child's/children's education and the provision of related facilities. The School endeavours to keep fees to a minimum, affordable level, commensurate with the quality of the education it provides and the actual running costs of the School.

### Fee Policy

A condition of enrolment at Birali Steiner School is the regular payment of school fees and levies as they become due. The fees and levies collected at Birali Steiner School are used for the following purposes, which are essential in providing a high quality of education for your child/children:

- Providing teaching, administrative and maintenance staff.
- Providing essential resources, materials, facilities and equipment.
- Providing an environment desirable for effective learning.
- Maintaining & increasing buildings, grounds and other facilities.
- Providing activities conducive to enriching the curriculum.

# Fee Policy & Procedures

## Issuing of Accounts

- I. Class Fees and other applicable fees (Termly Fees) are billed per term, yearly in advance and are due and payable prior to the start of each term or as otherwise advised.
- II. Other Sundry/Ad-hoc charges will be charged throughout the term with advance notification to parents.
- III. Enrolment Confirmation Fees and recurring Termly Fees will show on each Family Account in FACTS.
- IV. Invitations to access FACTS and Payment reminders will be emailed to all parties who sign the enrolment contract, regardless of who is nominated as responsible for the payment of fees.
- V. Refer to the current Schedule of Fees for a full list of fees and standard discounts on offer. These charges will be reviewed annually but may also need to be amended from time to time as deemed necessary by the School Board.
- VI. No remission of fees, either in whole or in part, will be made if the student is absent due to illness, leave or suspension.

## Late Payment

The School may terminate the enrolment of a student if the School fees remain unpaid at the end of term for which the fees are due or if an approved payment plan is not adhered to and falls in arrears.

## Fee Concession Policy

Whilst the school is required to charge fees in order to offer our services, we do endeavour to ensure fees are planned to support and benefit Birali families. Regardless, many families may experience extenuating and unexpected circumstances – typically due to injury, illness, death, family separation or job loss – where full fee payment becomes very difficult. During such times, the school would much rather support families through these times, than force students to leave the school during times of financial instability.

Birali Steiner School and community believe that the advantage of accessing a Steiner education is significant and important for all children and their families. We encourage all families across our wider community to connect with our Principal to discuss enrolment possibilities through a variety of ways that Birali may assist their participation.

In cases of financial hardship, the School may consider offering a concession on Tuition Fees ONLY. Concessions will be means tested and the assessment process will take all income into consideration (including Wages, Youth Allowance, all other Centrelink payments), expenses (such as housing, living and other costs) and assets held by the applicant/s.

In order to apply our social responsibilities with regard to the above, the school has a Fee Concessions budget and processes for applying Fee Concessions at the school.

- 1) All Fee Concession Applications are assessed on the information provided in the Fee Concession Application, meeting with the applicants and also in consideration of the relevant budget allocation. All Fee Concessions granted are intended to be a transitional arrangement, allowing the applicant/s time to better their situation, with the aim to be in a position to pay full fees at the end of the arrangement.
- 2) One of the most important ground rules for our Fee Concessions is confidentiality. The name and personal details of an applicant for Fee Concession will only be known by a very limited number of school staff. The family involved will also be bound by strict confidentiality and breaking this will result in the family losing access to the concession.
- 3) The Business Manager will consistently and equitably apply concessions within budgetary constraints.
- 4) The concession application and granting procedure needs to be transparent, equitable and consistent including proof of genuine financial hardship.
- 5) The Business Manager has ultimate discretion within the board approved budget.
- 6) The Business Manager will take into consideration the following for New Enrolments applying for Fee Concessions (prior to Enrolment or within the first year of Enrolment):
  - i) Excess capacity in classes to determine impact of concessions (e.g. running a class/year group at below student capacity).
  - ii) Maintaining established costs, without an unplanned increase in resourcing class (e.g. the teacher is there in any case); only offering concessions to “fill the gaps”. The establishment of new classes should not be caused by the acceptance of more concession students.

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- 7) Concession Conditions for all concessions:
  - a. Fee Concession will be only granted to families who are actively trying to improve their financial situation – therefore a set timeframe for each Fee Concession will enable more close monitoring of families while providing them with support.
  - b. Only one term at a time will be included in each agreement unless agreement has been reached by the Principal and Business Manager for a maximum of one school year and within Budget.
  - c. Needs based with a maximum Concession of 50% of Tuition Fees
  - d. Capped at one student per family. In extreme Financial Hardship circumstances, up to two students in one family may be able to receive Concession for up to two school terms (six months).
  - e. Fee Concessions longer than one term require a Fee Concession Contract which will outline the duration of a maximum of one school year of assistance.
  - f. The Concession amount will be discussed with the Family prior to the Contract being issued.
  - g. For those parents on a concession, the school will be strict in relation to payment of fees, Parents' transparency, prompt communication and student attendance.
  - h. Communication between school and parents will be regular and effective in determining financial status of families with concessions.
  - i. Fee Concessions longer than two school terms may be reviewed at six-month intervals. The review will be conducted by the Principal and Business Manager with the Concession applicants, referring to the conditions set out in the Concession Contract.
- 8) Every Concession given is checked and assessed by the Principal and the Business Manager.
- 9) Each case will be assessed separately and with its own merits.
- 10) A quarterly summary of current Fee Concessions (Percent, Duration & Quantity) is to be given to the School Board by the Business Manager.

## Fee Collection Procedure

- 1) Termly Fees are billed in PCSchool and emailed to families via FACTS Tuition Management:
  - a) at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the school year, or if a new enrolment commencing during the year, within two weeks of enrolment confirmation. The due date for each term's fees is the first day of Term.
    - i) OR if this condition cannot be met due to operational reasons, as close to the two weeks as possible, giving families a due date of a minimum of two weeks.
  - b) The first email of charges for the year will be an invitation to sign up for a payment plan / direct debit payment from FACTS, including:
    - i) A brief generic message, including any available discounts and contact details for the Finance Officer
    - ii) A brief message stating that if a payment plan is not chosen, FACTS will send a monthly invoice by default
    - iii) A link to follow to set up a direct debit payment plan – Termly, Monthly, Fortnightly or Weekly.
      - (1) During the payment set up process, the parents will be able to view the charge details with breakdown and total balance due
  - c) The next notice from FACTS is either:
    - i) Once a payment plan / direct debit has been set up by the parent, they will receive an automatic confirmation of the plan/payment from FACTS; including the total balance and the payments schedule; OR
    - ii) If not signed up for a payment plan and fall to the default monthly invoice, a notice showing invoice due dates.
- 2) FACTS Tuition Management system will send automatic follow up emails in the below instances:
  - a) Reminders for direct debit payments coming up
  - b) Invoices for accounts that have fallen to the default monthly invoices. Invoice emails will:
    - i) Be sent 20 days prior to the due date
    - ii) Provide a link to follow to make a payment
    - iii) Include a brief generic message and contact details for the Finance Officer

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- c) Monthly Statements for accounts that have fallen to the default monthly invoicing and is overdue on the invoice payment. The monthly Statements will state:
    - i) The due date; and the fees are now overdue
    - ii) A link to follow to make a payment
    - iii) The Term, what and who each charge or discount is for
    - iv) Details of the account and any approved payment plan in place
    - v) Include a brief generic message, including contact details for the Finance Officer
  - d) Returned payment notice including:
    - i) When the payment failed
    - ii) If it will re-attempt the payment and when
    - iii) A link to follow to make a catch-up payment
    - iv) Include a brief generic message and contact details for the Finance Officer
- 3) Account balances will be reviewed by the Finance Officer each month and if there are overdue balances that are not covered by an active payment plan, or the active payment plan has not been adhered to, a separate personalised email will be sent to all parties listed on the Enrolment Contract.
- a) The email will include the following information:
    - i) Subject Line to the effect of 'Outstanding overdue Account Balance'
    - ii) The date the account was due
    - iii) The current remaining balance
    - iv) A message asking for the family to please be in contact within 5 business days with the Finance Officer to discuss the outstanding balance. If they:
      - (1) are unable to pay the account in full, a payment plan can be discussed
      - (2) already have a payment plan and have not adhered to it, that they are in arrears of their plan and need to advise how they will catch up.
- 4) Further escalation may be required. In some cases, a referral to the Business Manager is required. If a response is not received from the family within 5 business days, the Finance Officer is to either:
- a) Call the family (responsible parties listed on the Enrolment Contract) to try and discuss the account by phone and make a note of the discussion outcome in FACTS; OR
  - b) Speak face to face with the family if they are regularly seen at Drop Off or Pick Up times. Notes are to be made of the discussion outcome in FACTS; AND
  - c) If the family:
    - (1) Does not commit to a set payment date of the full balance for the current Term within the current Term; OR
    - (2) Does not agree and follow through to complete a Payment Plan; OR
    - (3) No longer has a student enrolled at the School; OR
    - (4) Does not responda referral to the Business Manager is required.
- 5) Once an account is referred to the Business Manager:
- a) The Business Manager will send an email to all parties listed on the Enrolment Contract with the a summary of their account included, requesting a response within 3 business days (the Principal is to be copied in on this email).
    - i) If no response is received within 3 business days, the Business Manager will call the family to discuss suitable options and remind of the School's Fee Policy and that Debt Collection and Enrolment Termination may occur if no suitable arrangement is implemented. This discussion may be suited to a face to face meeting if a suitable time can be arranged.
      - (1) If the family aren't responding to calls or emails and are not seen at Drop Off or Pick Up, a FINAL DEMAND email including:
        - (a) Subject Line of 'Final Demand Notice – School Fee Account'
        - (b) A brief message explaining the various attempts at contacting the family
        - (c) A copy of the account included, and the total outstanding
        - (d) Reminder of the Fee Policy and the School's right to terminate enrolments and pass the account to a Debt Collector where an Administration Charge of 15% of the outstanding balance will be added to the account (the amount added and what the new total will be, will be stated)
        - (e) Requesting a response within 3 business days
        - (f) The Principal is to be copied in on this email

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- (2) If a suitable arrangement to clear the outstanding debt is not reached, the account will be referred to a Debt Collection Agency.
  - (a) Once referred to a Debt Collection Agency, details will be passed on to the Finance Committee.
  - (b) If the Agency advises that they recommend following through with legal proceedings, this will be discussed within the Finance, Risk, Audit & Compliance Sub-Committee and depending on the recommendation from the agency, a recommendation made to the School Board.