



Fee Policy & Procedures

Purpose:	To outline the Policy & relevant Procedures related to the collection of Student recurrent fees; including Fee Concessions.		
Scope:	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.		
Status:	Authorised	Supersedes: Version 20201113	
Authorised by:	School Principal	Policy Owner:	School Principal
		Date of Authorisation: 22/11/22	
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of Fees • Enrolment Contract • Fee Concession Application Form • Fee Concession Contract 		
Review Date:	Two yearly	Next Review Date: Nov 2024	
Definitions:	<p>Fee(s): A collective that covers the recurring Termly billed fees for each student (Compulsory Class Contributions – Tuition Fees and Levies).</p> <p>Fee Concession: A discount by application and approval, due to financial hardship reasons applied to Tuition Fees only.</p> <p>PCSchool: 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 – compulsory contributions 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.

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Issuing of Accounts

- I. Compulsory Class Contributions are billed per term, yearly in advance and are due and payable prior to the start of each term or as otherwise advised or agreed in writing through a direct debit payment plan.
- II. Other Sundry/Ad-hoc charges will be charged throughout the term with advance notification to parents.
- III. Enrolment Confirmation Fees and recurring Compulsory Class Contributions will show on each Family Account in PCSchool.
- IV. Invitations to access PCSchool, Payment information and 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 Compulsory Class Contributions 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 a 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.

In cases of financial hardship, the School may consider offering a concession on Compulsory Class Contributions 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.

As a not-for-profit, developing independent school, Birali is not able to offer discounted rates for pension/health care card holders or long-term financial hardship concessions.

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, discussing with the applicants and also in consideration of the relevant budget allocation.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.
- 4) The Business Manager will consistently and equitably apply concessions within budgetary constraints.
- 5) The concession application and granting procedure needs to be transparent, equitable and consistent including proof of genuine financial hardship.
- 6) The Business Manager has ultimate discretion within the Board approved budget.
- 7) For New Enrolments applying for Fee Concessions, the Business Manager will take into consideration the following (prior to commencing 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).

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- 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.
- 8) 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. Up to one school year will be included in each agreement.
 - c. Needs based with a maximum Concession of 50% of Tuition Fees; within Fee Concession budget allocation.
 - 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.
 - e. Fee Concessions longer than one term require a Fee Concession Contract which will outline the terms and conditions to be adhered to for the duration of the agreement.
 - f. For those parents on a concession, the school will be strict in relation to payment of fees, Parents’ transparency, prompt communication and student attendance. Parents will be required to sign up to a Direct Debit payment plan through the school’s nominated facility at the school’s expense.
 - g. Communication between school and parents will be regular and effective in determining financial status of families with concessions.
 - h. 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.
- 9) Every Concession given is checked and assessed by the Principal and the Business Manager.
- 10) Each case will be assessed separately and with its own merits.
- 11) Any Fee Concession outside of the above parameters will be presented to the School Board, de-identified, for Board approval prior to implementation.
- 12) A quarterly summary of current Fee Concessions (Percent & Quantity) is to be given to the School Board by the Business Manager.

Compulsory Contributions (Fee) Collection Procedure

- 1) Compulsory Contributions are billed in PCSchool and emailed to families:
- 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 fees for the year will be an invitation to sign up direct debit payment plan with the school’s nominated facility, including:
 - i) A brief generic message, including any available discounts and contact details for Fee Account enquiries.
 - ii) A link to follow to set up a direct debit payment plan – Termly, Monthly, Fortnightly or Weekly.
 - c) The next notice is either:
 - i) Once a direct debit payment plan has been set up by the parent, they will receive an automatic reminder of the payment from the direct debit facility; OR
 - ii) If not signed up for a payment plan a reminder for payment from the School.
 - d) Monthly Statements will be sent by the School. The monthly Statements will state:
 - i) The due date
 - ii) A link to payment options
 - iii) The Term, what and who each charge or discount is for
 - iv) Contact details for Fee Account enquiries

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- 2) Account balances will be reviewed by the School 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 School 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, how they intend to catch up can be discussed.
- 3) 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 responsible staff member 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 PCSchool; 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 PCSchool; AND
 - c) If the family:
 - (1) Does not commit to a set payment date of the full balance of any arrears amounts 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 respond

a referral to the Business Manager is required.
- 4) Once an account is referred to the Business Manager:
 - a) The Business Manager will review all the notes and the account. The Business Manager will then determine the next course of action dependent on the individual circumstances which may include sending an email to all parties listed on the Enrolment Contract with 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
 - (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 School Board's Finance Sub-committee.
 - (b) If the Agency advises that they recommend following through with legal proceedings, this will be discussed within the Finance Sub-Committee and depending on the recommendation from the agency, a recommendation made to the School Board.