

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 1.2 FEE ASSISTANCE, DISCOUNTS & COLLECTION POLICY

<b>Drafted date:</b> 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2018	<b>Approved date:</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
<b>Reviewed date:</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	<b>Next review due date:</b> October 2025
<b>Associated policies:</b> 1.1 Student Enrolment Policy	
<b>Associated Laws:</b> <i>Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998</i>	

#### INTRODUCTION

We aim to make Steiner education accessible to those families in the Port Macquarie region who choose it. Our fees are in line with the other independent schools in the area, and we offer fee assistance to provide financial support to eligible families.

Fee assistance is means based and may be offered where financial need is demonstrated. The fee assistance scheme outlined in this policy is designed to support families who are unable to meet the full fees. This need may be demonstrated at the point of enrolment or at any point in time when the circumstances of a family may change.

#### POLICY

##### 1. Fee Assistance

The Fee Assistance Committee, as delegated by the board, assesses all fee assistance applications. Parents may appeal to the Fee Assistance Committee asking for a reconsideration of the decision, if they can provide additional information not contained in the initial application.

The fee assistance discount is applied to tuition fees and may include instrumental lessons. It does not extend to insurance or maintenance levies, excursions, camps and costs for special school items such as hats or recorders.

Fee assistance may be offered in the form of a discount of up to 75% and in exceptional circumstances 100% of tuition fees, depending on the financial, compassionate, or other circumstances of the applicants.

Where fee assistance is offered to a family eligible for other discounts (sibling or staff), only one discount will apply, whichever is the greater in dollar amount.

Where fee assistance is awarded, any bond that has been paid to the school at the time of enrolment will be retained by the school at the end of the student's schooling or upon withdrawal.

Fee assistance is awarded annually. All fee assistance is subject to a review of family circumstances each year, and may be increased, decreased, or withdrawn, depending on the circumstances.

New families may apply for fee assistance at the time of enrolment, such assistance to commence upon approval.

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 1.2 FEE ASSISTANCE, DISCOUNTS & COLLECTION POLICY

Existing fee assistance recipients will be issued with a review form in term 3 to apply for continuing assistance, if required, for the subsequent school year.

#### 2. Applying for Fee Assistance

Families may complete the Fee Assistance Application Form at the point of enrolment or at any stage during their child's enrolment when there has been a change in parents' or guardians' circumstances that affects payment of fees.

In the case of a change in circumstances, the assessment criteria will also include the following considerations:

- a good history of paying tuition fees prior to the change in circumstances; and
- demonstration of good attitude from the student and family showing a commitment to the values of the school.

Fee Assistance may be given to parents or guardians of children in any year group at the school and is offered according to the criteria outlined in this policy and at the discretion of the Fee Assistance Committee.

The Fee Assistance Application Form should be completed as fully as possible, and all requested supporting information should be supplied at the time the form is submitted. Incomplete forms or inadequate details or financial documentation will mean that there is insufficient information to process the application.

The Fee Assistance Committee considers ongoing Fee Assistance applications for the subsequent year in term 3 each year. The school's capacity to provide fee assistance is limited and is offered to those who meet the criteria outlined below.

Families who apply for fee assistance on enrolment application or outside of this timeframe, will still be considered and assessed against the criteria outlined below.

Where Fee assistance is not offered, a payment plan or short-term fee deferral may be offered in place.

#### 3. Fee Assistance Criteria

The following criteria are used to determine eligibility:

- Family circumstances

This will be assessed by (a) information the family provides, (b) if a continuing student, reports from the student's teachers on the student's life in the school, and (c) in some circumstances an interview with the Fee Assistance Committee.

- Financial circumstances

The school has a duty to ensure that Fee assistance is allocated appropriately and so the Fee assistance Committee will assess the supporting documents of the application –latest income

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 1.2 FEE ASSISTANCE, DISCOUNTS & COLLECTION POLICY

tax returns, latest two pay slips, and any current Centrelink payment statements. The Fee Assistance Committee will also consider the size of the family, the number of dependents and any special needs of the family members.

- Other factors

In addition to the above there may be other factors that can be considered where appropriate. These can include for example:

- siblings at the school
- social and other needs of the child

#### 4. Commitment to the School

Families need to commit to notifying us of any changes to circumstances that may reduce the need for fee assistance support from the school, even if this is part way through a school year.

Families receiving fee assistance are asked to consider ways they can contribute to the life of the school in ways other than financial, such as participation in working bees, classroom support, or voluntary work in skill areas which may be of value to the school. As with all families at the school, families receiving fee assistance are advised to consult with the Education Director, or their child's teacher in this regard.

#### 5. Sibling Discount

The school offers discounts for sibling enrolments as 30% for the second child enrolled in the same year and 50% for the third and any subsequent siblings enrolled in the same year. The sibling discount is only applied to tuition fees. Sibling discounts are applied automatically as there is no application process for this discount.

#### 6. Staff Discount

The school offers a 30% discount on tuition fees for permanent staff who have children enrolled in the school. This discount applies to tuition fees only and to each child enrolled.

#### 7. Single Discounts

Where a family is eligible for multiple discounts (fee assistance, sibling or staff), only one discount will apply, whichever is the greater in dollar amount.

#### 8. Guidelines for the Collection of Fees

As far as is reasonable, the issue of outstanding fees will be kept separate from continuing enrolment of a student.

Fee collection will be implemented to:

- Maintain a culture of expectation surrounding the payment of fees and contributing to the school in this financial way.
- Minimise the cost burden to the school community in the management of debtors.
- Supporting families experiencing temporary financial hardship.

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 1.2 FEE ASSISTANCE, DISCOUNTS & COLLECTION POLICY

- Encourage timely and open communication between families and school administration regarding any issues impacting on fee payments.

An extension for payment of fees can be approved verbally by the Business Manager until the last day of the term the fees have been incurred.

Any extension for payment of fees beyond the last day of the term the fees have been incurred must be approved in writing by the Business Manager and recorded on a signed agreement.

Payment Plans can be established and approved by the Business Manager. The Business Manager will implement payment plans that support the circumstances of the family and work to ensure the total amount owing is paid by the end of the school year. Payment Plan Agreements must be signed by the person responsible for paying school fees and the Business Manager.

Any changes to payment extensions or payment plans require a new agreement to be entered into.

#### **9. Privacy**

All fee assistance and payment plan applications are subject to the school's privacy policy which can be accessed at any time via our website or by request. The school respects the confidentiality of fee assistance and payment plan applications and offers. Families are also expected to maintain the same level of confidentiality.

All fee assistance and payment plan applications are viewed only by those who are part of the decision-making process. Personal information provided as part of a fee assistance application is strictly handled in confidence within the Fee Assistance Committee. Teachers are not involved in any decisions around fee assistance but may provide relevant information to the Fee Assistance Committee.

#### **RESOURCES**

Fee Assistance Application Form  
Payment Plan Application Form

#### **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years