

PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

1.2 FEE ASSISTANCE POLICY

Drafted date: 19 th August 2018	By: M Ayriss	Approved by Board date: 11 th August 2021
Reviewed date: July 2021	By: Fee Assistance Committee	Next review due date: July 2022
Associated policies:	1.1 Student Enrolment Policy	
Associated Laws:	<i>Commonwealth Privacy Act 1998</i>	

INTENTION

As part of our core values, the school is committed to inclusiveness and making Steiner education accessible to families in the Port Macquarie region. As such our fees are in line with the other independent schools in the area, and we have a fee assistance option to provide means based financial support to eligible families.

INTRODUCTION

Fee assistance is means based and may be awarded 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 the family change.

POLICY

1. Fee Assistance

1.1 Where fee assistance is made, 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.

1.2 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.

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 All fee assistance is subject to a review of family circumstances each year, and may be increased, decreased, or withdrawn, depending on the circumstances.

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

1.5 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.

1.6 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

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the initial application. 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.

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 awarded to parents or guardians of children in any year group at the school and are offered according to the policy 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 school's capacity to provide fee assistance is limited and is awarded to those deemed most eligible. Families who apply will be assessed against the criteria as described below. Each case is assessed on its own merits and offers are made accordingly, subject to the overall budget of the school.

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

3. 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

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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 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 needs of the child

4. Privacy

All fee assistance 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 applications and offers. Families are also expected to maintain the same level of confidentiality.

All fee assistance applications are viewed only by those who are part of the decision-making process and personal information 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.

5. Commitment to the School

Families need to commit to notifying us of any changes to circumstances that may reduce the need for 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.

RESOURCES

Fee Assistance Application Form

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually