

DARA SCHOOL

38
FEE POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Fee Policy is to ensure that fees are set at a level to maintain quality education for students whilst having consideration for the financial capacity of the parent community. The Board will ensure that the School has a systematic and identifiable procedure for the setting and collection of fees, thus helping to ensure the financial well-being of the School.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Dara School from Reception through to Year 12 and their parents.

3. PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin the Dara School Fee Policy.

- The education of children is a joint responsibility of parents and the School.
- The School Board recognises that parents come from diverse backgrounds and varying income levels.
- Equity and justice are the foundations of the School Fee Policy.
- Every person is treated with dignity and respect.
- The inability to pay school fees shall not be a reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of a child from Dara School.
- The expectation is that families pay their fees in full and on time.

4. FEES & OTHER CHARGES

At Dara School the fees for all year levels are the same as students are placed in subjects based on their ability rather than age. The same tuition and curriculum fee is charged for each student regardless of what base year level they are enrolled in. In addition to the Tuition and Curriculum fees, other fees that may be charged at Dara School are:

- South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Fee
- Enrolment Deposit
- Other Fees & Charges
- Association Membership Fee

Tuition Fee – This fee helps to cover all costs associated with the operation of the school, including administrative support, wages, servicing of loans and other financial charges and building maintenance. A tuition fee is charged for each child.

Curriculum Fee – This fee is used to fund costs associated with classroom consumables, curriculum support, IT resources and other materials related to the teaching of students. The curriculum fee is charged to each child.

SACE Fee – This fee is used to cover the additional costs that are associated with the teaching of SACE subjects and is in addition to the Tuition & Curriculum Fee.

Enrolment Deposit – The Enrolment Deposit is a flat fee payable on the acceptance of an enrolment offer at Dara School. The enrolment deposit is held by the school until the child's last term at the school where it can be used to offset any fees owing at that time, donated to the building or scholarship fund, or refunded.

Other Fees & Charges – Fees for camps, excursions, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program and other activities that are passed on to parents are invoiced separately and are separate to the other fees.

Late Fee – A late fee, as set by the Board, will be charged for all accounts that are in arrears 14 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been confirmed in writing by the School.

Association Membership Fee – As per the Dara Village Incorporated Constitution there are two types of membership of the Association:

- Ordinary
- Associate

The Board is responsible for the setting of fees for each class of membership on an annual basis as part of the budget process and informing the parent community by using the Fee Schedule that is released prior to term 4 starting.

Vocation Education and Training (VET) Fee

This is a fee billed to families for students undertaking a VET course as part of their SACE studies. This fee is set by the Registered Training Organisation and billed to the School. The school will then invoice the family for payment. A subsidy may be available as per the VET Policy.

5. LIABILITY FOR FEES

Liability for payment of accounts rests jointly and severally with the person(s) signing the Dara School Enrolment Agreement. If both parents have signed the Enrolment Form, one parent cannot remove themselves from the enrolment contract without written consent from the School and the other enrolling parent.

5.1 SEPARATED FAMILIES

It is not normal practice for the school to produce split accounts for separated families, it is an expectation in these circumstances that parents will negotiate payment of fees outside of school. In circumstances where this is not possible an account can be split using the form 'Amendment of Fees Responsibility'.

This is done for convenience on a case-by-case basis, but both will parties remain jointly and severally responsible if the other defaults on payment. It is noted that changes to the enrolment agreement cannot modify the rights and responsibilities that both parents have under statute, and their status as partners with the School in the education of their child/ren.

The fact that a parent pays no, or discounted fees does not affect that parent's right to be involved in their child/ren's education to the same degree as the parent paying more.

6. FEE REDUCTIONS/REMISSIONS

In recognition of the varying financial circumstances of families of students enrolled at Dara School there are a variety of fee reductions or remissions available. The reductions and remissions available are:

- Sibling Discount
- School Card Scheme

- Principal's Equity Scholarship
- Bursary
- Staff Discount
- Annual Fee Payment Discount

Sibling Discount – Discounts on the Tuition Fees are available for families with multiple children attending the school during the same calendar year. The discount is applicable to the second and subsequent child/ren in the family and is reviewed by the Board each year.

School Card Scheme – School Card is a South Australian Government means tested assistance scheme focussed on providing educational expense support to families on a low income. Non-Government Schools do not receive funding under this scheme, but Dara School provides a fee remission of 30% of the Tuition Fee for eligible families. The scheme is administered by The Department for Education who then notify the school of a person's eligibility.

Principal's Equity Scholarship – The purpose of the scholarship is to provide another avenue for low-income families to pursue enrolment at Dara School. The scholarship is for one academic year only and provides a 50% remission on the annual Tuition Fees. Continuation of the scholarship is not automatic, and recipients must reapply each year. More information can be found on the School's website and viewing the Dara School Scholarship Application Form.

Bursary – A Bursary is a special discount that is based on financial hardship above and beyond that of the School Card Discount for families who find themselves in a situation where they are experiencing *short-term* financial hardship. A request for financial assistance is to be submitted using the form 'Bursary Application'.

To maintain the highest level of confidentiality the application will only be available to the Principal and Business Manager. The Finance Committee will be informed of the number of applications and amount granted through this process.

Staff Discount – Permanent fulltime and parttime staff with children enrolled at the school will receive a 20% discount on their annual tuition fees.

Annual Fee Payment Discount – A discount of 5% on the tuition fees is available if the annual Tuition and Curriculum fees are paid in advance by the Friday of week 2 of Term 1. A specific date is to be provided in the annual Fee Schedule.

A student may not receive more than one fee remission at any one time. Where this situation arises the highest proportionate fee reduction will be applied.

7. FEE INVOICING & PAYMENT

Dara School supports the concept of equitable financial responsibility by all members of the community and that payment of fees by the due date or by way of regular payments is part of the process. To achieve this the School encourages communication between all parties in relation to the payment of fees.

School fees are billed on a term-by-term basis, but an annual bill can be provided on request. The Fee Schedule will outline the methods by which the fees can be paid, and the dates that payment is required by.

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If a payment agreement has been agreed, all fees and charges are payable in full by 30 November in the year they are billed. Payment agreements must be signed by both the family and the school and include payment instructions using the Fee Payment Agreement form.

8. METHODS OF PAYMENT

School fees can be in one of the following ways:

- In person using cash or credit/debit card (Visa or Mastercard)
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) as a direct credit to the school's bank account using the details found on the fee invoice.

8.1 UNPAID FEES

Every parent who enrolls their child/ren in the school has an obligation to pay their school fees as a matter of justice to the whole school community.

The enrolment deposit will be used to cover any outstanding fees before using a collection agency.

8.2 DEBT COLLECTION

In situations when fee retrieval action is required, all costs incurred by Dara School in pursuing the debt, including legal costs, solicitor's fees, administration costs and collection / mercantile agency costs will be passed on to the family as per the Debtor management Policy.

8.3 SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT

Dara School, at its absolute discretion, may suspend or cancel a student's enrolment where:

- Outstanding school fee amounts are owing to the school for a period of one term or more, and
- Where a satisfactory commitment to and fulfillment of an agreed payment arrangement has not been made.

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9. STUDENT ABSENCES

The payment of school fees is still required where a student is absent from school for any length of time. Requests for a fee reduction may be made for compassionate reasons, with all requests being in writing and addressed to the Principal.

10. STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

A family is required to give 10 weeks' notice of withdrawal, in writing to the Principal. This includes students who are leaving at the end of the year who must advise the Principal on or before the first day of term 4.

If the required notice is not provided and fees remain unpaid:

- The school will apply the enrolment deposit to the unpaid fees and retain any unused portion of the enrolment deposit.
- The Finance Committee will determine if any remaining unpaid fees should be pursued or not.

If the required notice is provided the school will provide the family with the opportunity to:

- Apply the enrolment deposit to any unpaid fees and receive the remainder as a refund.
- If all fees are paid receive the full amount as a refund.
- Donate the amount to either the Building or Scholarship Fund, both of which have Deductible Gift Recipient status.

11. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 SCHOOL BOARD

- Establish a clear and just Fee Policy in accordance with the school's vision, values, and principles of this policy.
- Approve the proposed fees during the annual budget process.
- Exercise oversight through the Finance Committee of the Fees processes, including processes for the collection of outstanding fees and review of its debtor situation.
- Establish a clear understanding of who has responsibility for following through fee collection.

10.2 FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Provide a recommendation to the Board on what the fees for the new school year should be.
- Review and monitoring of overdue debtors
- Review outstanding debt and authorise the use of debt collection in situations where it is required.
- Assist the Principal in the implementation of this policy.

10.3 PRINCIPAL

- Ensure that interactions between school staff and parents/guardians with regards to fees and debt are consistent with this policy.
- Assess Scholarship applications in accordance with the guidelines.
- In conjunction with the Business Manager assess Bursary applications

10.4 BUSINESS MANAGER

- Ensure the processes and procedures for the administration of fees and debt at the school are in accordance with this policy and other referenced policies and procedures.
- Give appropriate advice to the Principal and Finance Committee about matters relating to fees setting and fee collection.
- In conjunction with the Principal, assess Bursary applications and provide feedback to the Finance Committee.

10.5 PARENTS / GUARDIANS

- Pay their fees as determined by the school as agreed to upon signing the Enrolment Agreement.
- Be honest in their dealings with the school.
- Respect the circumstances of other parents/guardians in the school community.

12. MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years.

The review will be conducted by the Finance Committee and recommendations provided to the Board on any required amendments.

13. EDUCATION STANDARDS BOARD

This policy supports **critterion 1.4** of the Standards for Registration and Review of Registration of Schools in South Australia.

Criterion 1.4 The school (or schools that form part of a system) is governed by a body which collectively has the knowledge, skills and experience to effectively govern the school, and which is responsible for

- setting the school's enrolment policy and practices in compliance with Commonwealth and South Australian laws
- ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the school and reporting on the school's financial performance

14. FORMS/GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES RELATED TO THIS POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Enrolment Policy
- Fee Schedule
- Form 38.2 - Amendment of Fees Responsibility
- Form 38.11 - Bursary Application
- Policy – Debt Collection
- Procedure – Debt Collection
- Dara School Scholarship Application Form

Title	Fee Policy
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Policy to be reviewed	August 2030