



Fee and Fee Collection Policy

Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten Incorporated Association collects fees from parents, to cover the shortfall between Government funding and the cost of running the School, Kindergarten and Playgroup.

These fees will be set by the Committee on an annual basis, beginning at the start of each year. In making the decision to increase fees, and as to the percentage of fee increase, the Australian Government School Recurrent Cost (AGSRC), which measures the cost of education, is taken into consideration, as is the CPI. Given unforeseen circumstances, fees may change during the year.

The fees schedule is available from the office, on the website and is included in information packs.

By enrolling a child at the School, Kindergarten or Playgroup, the parent/carer is accepting this requirement to pay fees, and agrees to make the necessary payments within the terms specified in this policy. The Committee appreciates, and is grateful for, the substantial commitment which care givers make to pay school and kindergarten fees.

In some years, some of the fees collected for school tuition may be utilised for the operation of the kindergarten and playgroup. The committee of management has an ongoing commitment to ensure their viability as feeders to the school.

A non-refundable one-off application fee is payable when children first enrol in the kindergarten or the school. This fee covers the administrative costs associated with the enrolment process. It is not a guarantee of an offer of a place in the kindergarten or the school, but placement on our waiting lists will not occur until this fee is paid and the date of payment will be registered as the enrolment date which will affect family's position on the waiting list.

An offer of place in the school is accepted with a payment of an enrolment bond. This bond only applicable to school enrolments. The enrolment bond is refundable when the child finishes school at the end of Year 6, or when one full term's written notice of withdrawal is given. If there are any outstanding fees, the enrolment bond will be credited to the account before any credit balance is refunded. For re-enrolling students, a new enrolment bond is required, even if the previous bond was forfeited. If not claimed within 6 months of a student leaving the school, and the school having sent notifications out to the family, the bond will be transferred to the school building fund and deemed as a donation to the school.

Annual school fee invoices will be generated by the administration team prior to the beginning of the year and posted and emailed to carers. Estimates of fortnightly, monthly, or termly payments will also be posted to families at the beginning of the year in the form of a payment plan. There is an expectation that each family will return a signed payment plan with a payment commitment. Statement are sent out at the beginning of every month, unless fees have been paid in full.

Invoices for the kindergarten and playgroup fees will be generated and sent out prior to the beginning of each term. These fees are not included in the school fee payment schedules. These fees are payable by the end of the second week of each term.

The invoiced fees for both kindergarten and school incorporate all costs, such as class resources, swimming, strings classes, eurythmy, hard and soft craft resources, camps and excursions. A recorder is included in the class one term fee. If a child enrolls at the school after class one, there will be an extra charge for a recorder.

Parents of school children have the choice to participate in helping maintain the grounds of the school for four hours per parent during each year, or pay a subsidy noted in the fees schedule. Working Bees are held each term or parents are welcome to contribute to the garden independently at any time. The book to record the hours is located at the school front office.

A reduction in tuition fees will be applied where two or more siblings of the one family attend the school concurrently. Rebates are, for first sibling, (or second enrolled child) 15%; second sibling, 30%; third and subsequent siblings, 45%. Sibling discounts will also apply to families who have twins attending the kindergarten program concurrently. The discount does not apply across the kindergarten and school.

A family who identify themselves as having Torres Strait islander or aboriginal heritage will receive a 50% discount on their fees. This is passing on the extra funding the school receives from the federal government.

If a family is on an extended holiday, they may make an application via the committee for a fee reduction. A 50% discount may be given for those families away from the school for one term or more.

The Conveyance Allowance is a government payment to parents who convey their child/ren more than 4.8km to school (one way) and is to assist with travel costs. (It is only available for school families.) Application to the Department of Education is made through the school administration office at the beginning of each term and application forms are available at the front office. All conveyance payments will be deducted off any outstanding fees prior to being refunded to carers. Applications can be rolled over from year to year if the child's situation does not change. If the child's address changes or a sibling joins the school, a new application must be made.

Financial discounts are given to all carers/parents of the school, who hold a health care card. Applications must be made via the front office, where a photo copy of the health care card will be taken. This discount equates to approximately 20% of the annual fees. The discount will not be back dated but will apply from the date the health care card is lodged with the front office.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood offer a subsidy for parents holding a health care concession card to be applied against fees for kindergarten. The administration office will make the application on behalf of carers, once a copy of the carer's health care card is received at the school front office.

If no payment is received within four weeks of the school term, carers will receive a letter asking for a meeting with the Business Manager where a formal payment plan will be drawn up and signed. If contact is not made with the Business Manager and an appropriate payment plan agreed to by week six of the term, the account holders will receive a lawyer's letter. If still no response, the account will be placed with a debt collector. All charges incurred with debt collection will be payable by the account holder.

If a family defaults on a payment plan, the family will be given one term to catch up to the original payment plan. If circumstances have changed, a new payment plan may be agreed to. When a payment plan is not adhered to for over a term, the child/ren may be asked to leave the school and/or kindergarten.

If a family does not make contact with the Business Manager to make a payment plan, the child will be asked to leave the school and/or kindergarten.

Payments of fees can be made throughout the year through the administration office, by cheque or cash, or via internet banking. Cheques are to be made payable to Ballarat Steiner School. All regular payment plans must ensure the full annual fees are paid by the end of November. Any outstanding fees at the end of November will be automatically sent to a debt collection company unless a formal payment agreement is in place.

Bursaries are available for financial difficulty through application via the Business Manager to the Committee. Bursaries are for short term financial difficulties and will not be offered for terms greater than two years. It is conditional for continued tenure of bursaries that fee payment remains within the above terms. All other discounts, such as siblings discount, CSEF payments and Financials discounts are absorbed into the bursary discount. Bursary applications required by the end of November for the following year.

The school and kindergarten will charge a late payment fee of 1.5% per month on accounts not paid by the commencement of the following term. This fee will only be varied when a payment agreement is in place.

The school is continually undertaking capital building projects within the School Master Building Plan, which require regular financial commitments. Donations to the School's Building Fund are encouraged on a voluntary basis any time and are fully tax deductible.

All parents with children enrolled in the school are required to give a term's notice if the child is to be withdrawn. If no notice is given, a terms fees will be charged in lieu of notice. There is an assumption that all children enrolled in the school will be progressing to the next level in the school, in the next year, unless prior notice is given. This notice period is one term. A terms fee will be charged in lieu of notice.

Committee of Management
Reviewed October 2021.

