

# CASTLEMAINE STEINER SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

## SCHOOL FEES and FEE RETRIEVAL POLICY

7 June 2010

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

*The Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten adopts the following policy in the spirit of social and financial responsibility. Parents wishing to educate their children at this school are expected to undertake the financial responsibilities outlined. The intent of the school is to develop dialogue and consultation with parents in relation to the way this responsibility is taken up. Any parents who have severe difficulty in meeting the financial responsibilities of paying fees as required are encouraged to **always communicate with the school** with the aim of making fee payment agreements. The policy applies to both early childhood programmes (Playgroup, Ring a Rosie and Kindergarten) and School enrolments.*

### PURPOSE

*The purpose of this policy is to:*

- Ensure and maintain the timely payment of school fees.*
- Redirect administration time away from debt management*
- Have the cost of non-payment borne by the default payer, not by the rest of the school community.*
- Enable a transparent and consistent approach to be made with all families at the school in relation to payment of fees.*

The position in the school responsible for the implementation of this policy shall be the Business Manager and whoever she/he delegates to undertake the work of the policy. (Refer to the Business Manager Position Description)

### 1. General Conditions

- 1.1. It is a condition of admission to the school that both parents and guardians agree to abide by these terms of enrolment and any other rules, regulations or policies the school/board may approve from time to time. These guidelines are set out in the **Conditions of Admission Form** as attached to the current school enrolment application, and signed by both parents.
- 1.2. The applicant/s whose signatures appear on the Conditions of Admission Form as attached to the Enrollment Application form, shall be severally (singly/jointly) responsible for the payment of all fees and charges. Wherever possible both parents must sign this form.
- 1.3. The Entry Bond, as set by the Board of Directors, is to be paid for all new students at the time of accepting the offer or a place cannot be guaranteed.

- 1.4. Invoice/Statements are sent quarterly, in advance, in the last week of the school holidays or the first week of the school term and halfway through the term. Fees are payable by the date stated on the Invoice/Statement, usually 21 calendar days from the date on the Invoice/Statement.
- 1.5. Fees and charges are subject to amendment by the Board of Directors in advance. (I.e. generally *at least two months* before the commencement of the new school year to which they apply.)
- 1.6. EMA and Conveyance Allowances will be credited against accounts where relevant.
- 1.7. Kindergarten enrolments who receive Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (Health Care Card holders) will generally receive the rebate equally divided into 3 payments, paid in Term 2, 3 and 4.
- 1.8. Siblings of existing students with outstanding fees will normally not be offered a place in the school. (NB Ensure consistency with Enrolment Policy)
- 1.9. The School administration will inform the class teacher of any situation where a child's enrolment may be cancelled.
- 1.10. In accordance with the Enrolment Policy, approved part-time enrolments may be charged at a pro-rata rate of the fees, (Confirm with final Enrolment Policy)
- 1.11. If a student commences a term, is billed for that term, and then leaves at any point then 100% of the fees will be payable.
  - 1.11.1. If a student commences **after** half way through a term then 50% of the fee will be charged for that term. If a student commences within the first half of the term then they will be charged 100% of the fee.
  - 1.11.2. If a student leaves half way through a term, and has given a full terms notice, then 50% of the fee will be charged for that term. If a full terms notice is not provided then the full fee will be payable.
  - 1.11.3. This does not apply where a family is absent for a full term (for travel or serious illness) and the 50% fee to retain the child/rens place in the class applies. Music fees will be charged in the same manner, where the attendance of the child/ren is less than the full term.

## **2. Fee Agreements**

School Fees may be paid in installments under a written Fee Agreement :

- 2.1 The school reserves the right to renegotiate a Fee Agreement payment schedule at any time. For example this could be when a Fee Agreement is not covering the current year's fees.
- 2.2 The installment agreement encompasses any arrears as well as the following terms fees which should be arranged to be cleared in full by the end of each subsequent term and/or the current year as agreed by the Business Manager.
- 2.3 Parents may apply for an extension of time to pay the full term's fees and must sign a Fee Agreement Application, which must then be lodged with and approved by the Business Manager. The approved fee agreement will be confirmed to the debtor in writing.
- 2.4 In special circumstances, *where evidence of financial hardship is provided and accepted by the Business Manager*, the installments are calculated to ensure that the fees are paid out in full in a reasonable time\* provided that this is not longer than the period of enrolment of the child/ren. \*NOTE: "Reasonable Time" usually refers to the end of the current calendar year.
- 2.5 Any proposed arrangements that do not conform to these guidelines should be referred to the relevant committee of the Board of Directors for endorsement.
- 2.6 The Fee Agreement will clearly state:
  - the payment schedule (amount and frequency of payments),
  - commencement date
  - the method of payment and
  - include notification that should this payment schedule be defaulted on two consecutive occasions *without communication and subsequent arrangements with the School's Business Manager*, the school may engage debt collectors to recover outstanding amounts as well as any costs and may ultimately cancel the enrolment where fees remain unpaid.

## **3 Withdrawal by parents of student/s from the school**

- 3.1 If fees are outstanding on the departure of the student from the school, they remain payable to the school. This debt should be settled within 21 calendar days after the departure, or a fee agreement must be entered into between the parents and the school regarding the ongoing repayment of the debt. If this is not done, or not adhered to, the school will place the account in the hands of the school debt collector, and consider legal action.
- 3.2 A full term's notice, in writing, is required by the end of the first week of the term the student is leaving if a student is withdrawn from or ceases to attend the school, for any reason whatsoever.
- 3.3 Parents who wish for any reason to withdraw a student from the school must give a full term's notice in writing to the school. If such notice is not given:  
the payment of the current term's fees will be payable &  
the Entry Bond will not be refunded.
- 3.4 Point 3.3 also applies to parents who wish to withdraw their child/ren for a term or more for travel or any other reason. If a full term's notice is given the parent/s will be required to pay half fees, to keep the place available. If a full terms notice is not given then 100% of the fees will be required to keep the place available. If fees are not paid up to date at the point of departure, the place will not be kept open and procedures will commence to collect any outstanding debt.
- 3.5 The Entry Bond will not be refunded to the debtor if a full terms notice has not been given. When a full terms notice has been given and the debtor has outstanding fees the entry bond will be deducted from the debtors account, and/or any balances refunded to the debtor.
- 3.6 When a child is withdrawn with correct notice, or reaches the end of Year 8, the Entry Bond will either be credited to any outstanding fees and/or any balances refunded to the debtor.
- 3.7 Where a family has left the school with an outstanding debt and subsequently seeks to re-enroll child/ren at the school, the previous debt must be paid as a condition of the re-enrolment. A new Entry Bond is also required, even if the previous Bond was not returned due to the outstanding debt. Whilst a full and complete payment of the old debt is preferable, a written fee agreement may be arranged with the Business Manager for the payment of the old debt in circumstances of financial hardship.

#### **4. Processes to Collect Unpaid Fees**

- 4.1 Fees are deemed not to have been paid if remittance is not received within twenty one (21) calendar days or the due date on the fee Invoice/statement.
- 4.2 Processes to recover outstanding fees will be carried out in a confidential and sensitive manner by a delegated administration staff member.

- 4.3 After 21 calendar days one reminder/overdue notice requesting a response within 7 calendar days from receipt of the notice will be sent with a standard letter including a Fee Agreement application form. The debtor's may:
- : Send a letter or phone the school indicating their intention to settle the account in 7 calendar days or by returning a signed Fee Agreement application, which must be approved by the Business Manager.
  - Request a Fee Agreement meeting with the Business Manager. The interview with the School will be arranged within the next 7 calendar days. The Fee Agreement is made in accordance with the above policy.
  - Or if no response is received by the school within 7 calendar days
  - The School will request a Fee Agreement interview, with the Business Manager within the next 7 calendar days. A Fee Agreement is made in accordance with the points 2.1 – 2.6 of this policy.
- 4.4. Where a Fee Agreement is made for current and outstanding fees, it
- Should first cover the amount of each current term or year fees and then
  - should include an additional amount to ensure the old /outstanding debt is also paid within a time frame at the discretion of the Business Manager

## **5. Defaults of Fees or Fee Agreements**

5.1 A default is considered when:

- fees are not paid within the above time frame, (21 days + 7+7 days = 35 calendar days from the date the Invoice/statement was sent).
- parents have not responded to requests from the school to attend the Fee Agreement interview,
- a viable Fee Agreement is not reached;
- a Fee Agreement is defaulted, namely installments are not made according to the signed fee agreement

5.2 When there is a default the School will contact the family. The purpose of this meeting or phone call is:

- To review an already existing fee agreement to ensure the debt can be cleared in full by the end of the term or as agreed. This should involve “catch-up” payments to ensure the original agreement is met.
- In certain circumstances recommending the family apply for Fee Assistance under the conditions of the Fee Assistance Policy.
- To officially remind the parent that according to the policy should a Fee Agreement payment schedule be defaulted the school may ultimately engage debt collectors to recover outstanding amounts and costs and/or cancel the enrolment.

5.3 If the parent/s cannot or are not willing to make an attempt to pay the fees due under the agreed installment arrangement, or fail to attend any of the arranged meetings, the School will refer the matter to the relevant committee of the Board of Directors. The relevant Subcommittee will either:

- I. direct and advise the Business Manager to further pursue options for Fee Agreements or
- II. make recommendation that either
  - debt collection procedures be initiated
  - the enrolment be terminated and debt collection procedures be initiated or,
- III. the enrolment be allowed to continue with an accruing debt. The exceptional circumstances may include:

- where the family has assets to sell in the near future, and there is a signed agreement to allocate the proceeds to the school debt;
- where the family enrolment decreases (siblings leaving the school) over the next two years, enabling the family to then service the debt.
- Any other financial plan the family may offer to pay the debt in the future, as agreed to by the relevant committee.

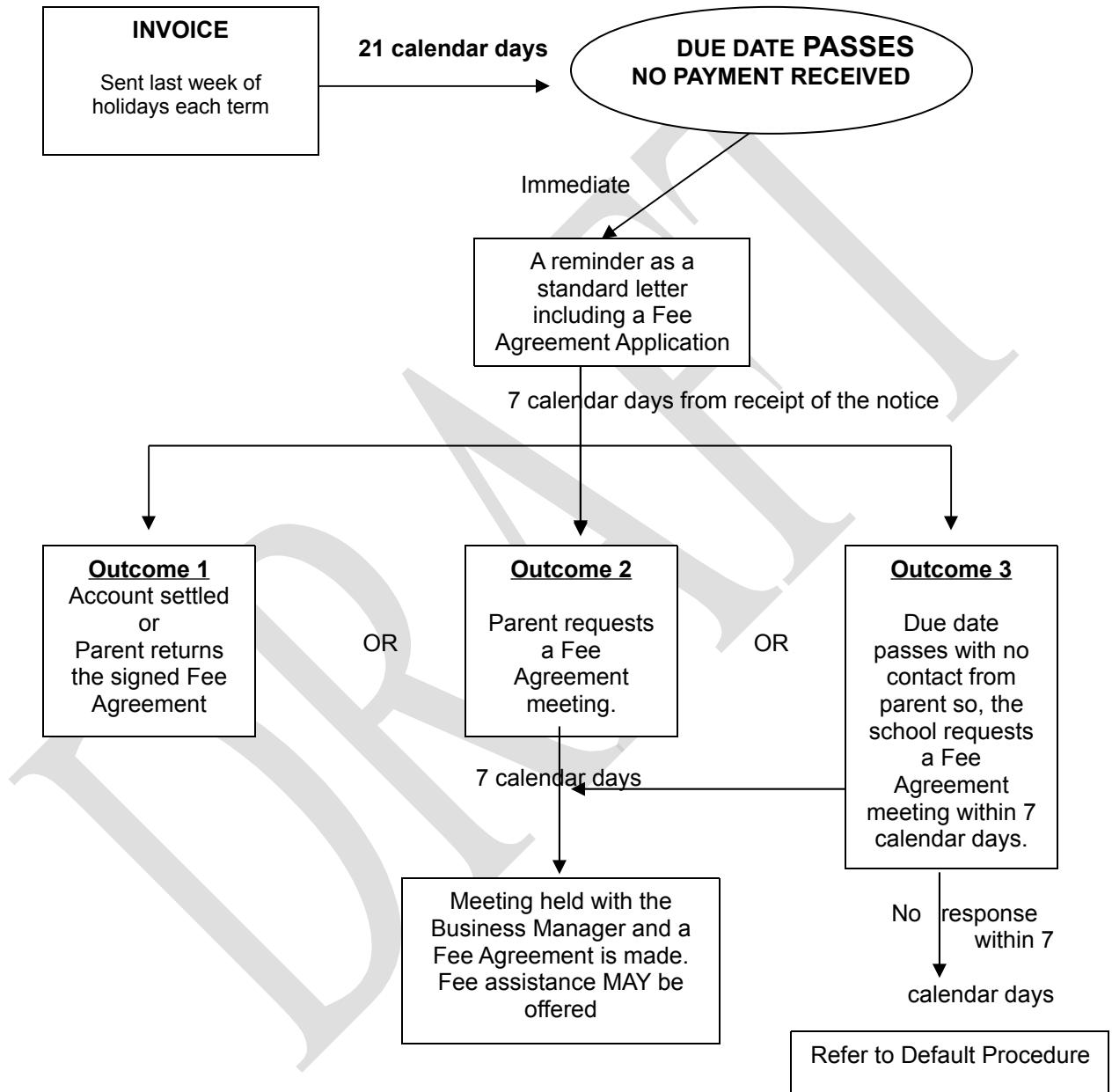
Anonymity will always be assured in any committee discussions unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

5.4 Families will be referred to the school's debt collection agency if:

- the above process is completed without successful payment of fees and/or at the discretion of the Business Manager.

# Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten

## Fee Retrieval Flowchart

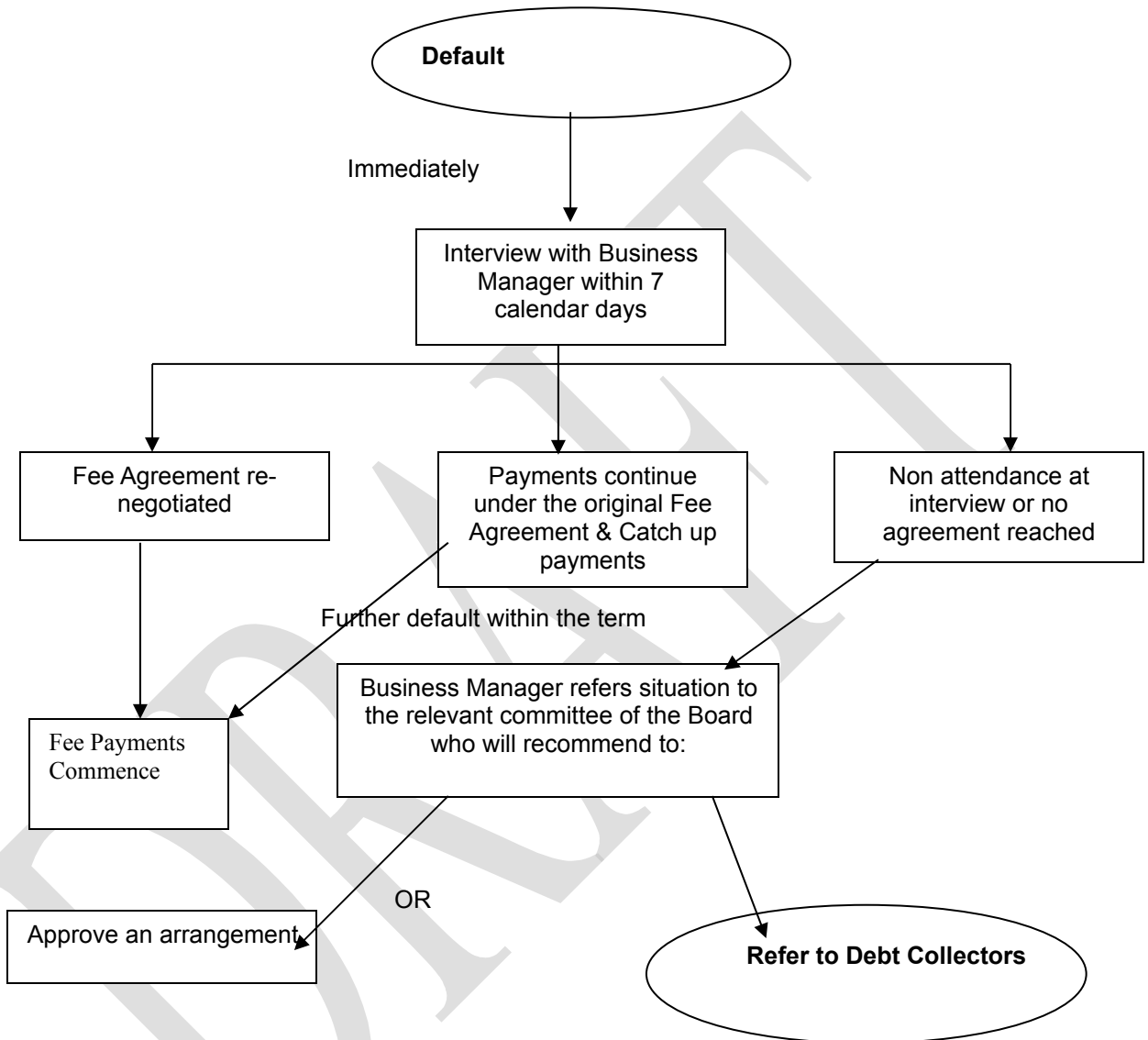


**NOTE:** Fee Agreement clearly states the payment schedule, the method and should include notification that should the payment schedule be defaulted without communication on two consecutive occasions the school may ultimately cancel the enrolment and engage debt collectors.

# Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten

## Default on Fees or Fee Agreement Flowchart

This process is to be applied when:



**Date Reviewed: Term 2, 2010**

**Signed: Board of Directors**

**Next Review: Term 2 2012**