

## FEE RETRIEVAL POLICY & PROCEDURE

Number of pages: 5	Appendices: 1	Forms: Fee Agreement Application
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### DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Nature of Amendment
<b>1.5</b>	<b>21 Feb 2018</b>	Add additional late fee to apply end of Week 4 of the term
<b>1.6</b>	<b>19 Sept 2018</b>	Revision of default definition and removal of detail of default and overdue payment process to enable easier revision of operational procedures; Removal of application of interest to long term payments for former parents; Other minor adjustments for clarification or consistency

### IMPLEMENTATION/ COMMUNICATION

Version	Date	Method	Notes

<b>PURPOSE</b>	The Fee Retrieval Policy and Procedure states Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten’s position on the collection of school fees, and sets out the process for fee retrieval.
<b>AIMS</b>	<p>Through the implementation of the Fee Retrieval Policy and Procedure CSSK aims to collect school fees in a timely and fair manner, taking into account the financial sustainability of the school, individual circumstances of families, and the wellbeing of children.</p> <p>This policy establishes a framework to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable a transparent and consistent approach in relation to the payment of fees for all families at the school;</li> <li>• Ensure and maintain the timely payment of school fees to a standard better than industry benchmarks;</li> <li>• Minimise the resources required for debt management;</li> <li>• Monitor and report on fee retrieval performance.</li> </ul>
<b>DEFINITIONS AND/OR LEGISLATION</b>	<p><b>Relevant Legislation</b> <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i></p> <p><b>Policies and Procedures to be read in conjunction with this policy</b> This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fees Policy</i></li> <li>• <i>Finance Policy</i></li> </ul>
<b>RATIONALE</b>	<p>School fees accounts for 36 percent of school income. It is important for the financial sustainability of the school that there are effective and efficient processes in place to ensure that school fees are paid on time and in full.</p> <p>It is equally important to recognise that the financial capacity of families varies between families and over time, so payment processes need to be flexible to accommodate this.</p> <p>This Fee Retrieval Policy is designed to balance the financial needs of the school with fairness to families and community expectations of the school.</p>
<b>POLICY</b>	<p>The school will have in place procedures to minimise fee default at all stages of the enrolment, billing, payment and collection process. The procedures will enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clearly understand their responsibilities for payment of fees;</li> <li>○ Understand the billing process;</li> <li>○ Know options for payment of fees;</li> <li>○ Know if their account is in arrears;</li> <li>○ Understand the consequences of non-payment of fees;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Relevant staff to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understand the system for administration of fees and fee retrieval;</li> <li>○ Deal with non-payment of fees;</li> <li>○ Maintain confidentiality in regard to financial matters.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>1. Admission</b></p>	<p>As a minimum in regard to fees, during the admission process for each child admitted to the school, the parents / guardians must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pay an Entry Bond on offer of enrolment;</li> <li>• sign their acceptance of the Conditions of Admission;</li> <li>• be given published materials setting out the fees and their obligations for paying the fees;</li> <li>• if the child is the family’s first child at the school, have an appointment with the Business Manager to ensure they understand their obligations and have an opportunity to ask questions.</li> </ul> <p><i>Conditions of Admission</i> The Conditions for Admission must state that the signatory / signatories of the form accept liability in regard to all school fees including application fee, entry bond, tuition fees, additional charges, administration fees, debt collection fees and other fees and charges. Where more than one signatory applies, signatories are jointly and severally liable for all fees and charges.</p> <p>Wherever possible both parents should sign the Conditions for Admission form.</p> <p><i>Published Materials</i> Published materials must be made available to parents during the admission process setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current school fee rates for each year level;</li> <li>• Other fees and charges;</li> <li>• Late payment charges;</li> <li>• Discounts such as sibling discount;</li> <li>• Assistance for financial hardship;</li> <li>• School’s rights and obligations in regard to fee increases;</li> <li>• Billing process;</li> <li>• Payment options;</li> <li>• Default process and consequences;</li> <li>• Bond refund conditions on withdrawal.</li> </ul> <p><i>Business Manager Meeting</i> The Business Manager will ensure that all finance related information has been received and signed off as read and understood by parents.</p>
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<p><b>2. Post-admission</b></p>	<p>The policy relating to fees, charges, discounts and assistance is set out in the Fees Policy. The Fees Policy and the Fee Retrieval Policy are closely interrelated. In particular the affordability of fees affects the level of late payments and non-payment of debts, while the timely and complete collection of fees reduces the need to increase fees. Any change to the fee structure and levels therefore needs to take into account the impact of the change on fee retrieval.</p> <p>The school will provide reasonable notice to parents of any change in finance arrangements that may impact on them.</p>
<p><b>3. Billing and Payment</b></p>	<p>School fees will be invoiced in advance each term prior to the start of the term. Additional charges will be added to the school fee invoice, and may be in advance or arrears.</p> <p>The School will accept payment by Direct Debit, EFT into the designated bank account, credit card, cheque, or cash.</p>

	<p>Invoices are payable in full by the Friday of Week 3 of the term being invoiced unless the debtor has entered into an alternative arrangement with the School. Alternative arrangements can be a Fee Agreement, Direct Debit Request, or request for late payment.</p> <p><i>Fee Agreement</i></p> <p>A debtor can enter into a Fee Agreement with the school on the Fee Agreement Application Form signed by the debtor and approved by the Business Manager. The Fee Agreement may encompass any arrears and fees for the period of the Fee Agreement. Current fees and charges should generally be cleared by the end of each term or may be averaged out and cleared by the end of each year.</p> <p>At the discretion of the Business Manager where there is evidence of financial hardship, the instalments can be calculated to allow deferring part payment by weighting payments beyond the end of the current term but before the end of the current year.</p> <p><i>Direct Debit Request (DDR)</i></p> <p>Payment by DDR is an arrangement whereby a debtor gives permission to the School to collect an agreed amount of funds from the debtor's bank account or credit card on a recurring basis. Where the DDR is to cover current fees only, the debtor may complete a DDR form without a Fee Agreement. Where the DDR is to cover any arrears or extend payment beyond the current school year, the DDR form must be accompanied with a Fee Agreement and is subject to approval by the Business Manager.</p> <p><i>Request for Late Payment</i></p> <p>A debtor may request approval by email for late payment of their invoice without the requirement to submit a Fee Agreement, as long as the payment is no more than four weeks past the due date. For periods of more than four weeks a Fee Agreement is required.</p>
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<p><b>4. Departing Families</b></p>	<p>Families leaving the school will be billed for any uncharged fees before their children's last day where possible.</p> <p>A final invoice showing additional charges accrued during the term and the final balance will be sent to the parents in the last week of school for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students completing Class 8 without any current siblings remaining at the school,</li> <li>• students being withdrawn before completion of Class 8 without any current siblings remaining at the school.</li> </ul> <p>Any new charges added to the final invoice will be payable three weeks after the child's withdrawal from the school. Overdue balances remain payable immediately.</p> <p>Departing families may request or be offered a payment plan in weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments by direct debit over twelve months if they are unable to settle their account in full by the due date:</p> <p>In cases where evidence is provided of significant financial hardship, a debtor may request to have an alternative fee agreement considered. Generally any agreement should be for a payment over a maximum of up to twelve months, however in circumstances where this is clearly not possible and no other options exist, a longer time frame can be considered, to be reviewed at the end of twelve months. Additional support under the School's Fees Policy, such as Fee Assistance, may also be considered.</p>
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## 5. Overdue Accounts and Default

The fee retrieval process for overdue payments shall be approved by Board resolution. The process shall include:

- a defined schedule of reminders, warnings, late fees and other steps to take to avoid the account reaching default,
- further steps to manage accounts in default including suspension of enrolment and referral to the school's debt collection agency.

The criteria for default will be applied to overdue accounts on the Friday of Week 8 of each term.

- For current families on payment by invoice, the account will be considered to be in default if it is not paid in full on the Friday of Week 8;
- Where a request for late payment after Week 8 has been approved, the account will be considered to be in default one week after the revised due date;
- For ad hoc invoices equivalent to half a term's fees or more, the account will be considered to be in default if it is not paid in full on the latter of one week after the payment due date or the Friday of Week 8;
- For families paying by weekly or fortnightly instalments on a fee agreement the account will be considered to be in default if on the Friday of Week 8 payments are in arrears by an amount totalling two weekly or fortnightly payments;
- For families paying by monthly instalments on a fee agreement the account will be considered to be in default if on the Friday of Week 8 payments are in arrears by an amount totalling one monthly payment, which is two weeks or more in arrears.