



DISCIMUS UT SERVIAMUS

PINEHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Achieving excellence in a value-based community

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY POLICIES FINANCE - SCHOOL FEES, FEE EXEMPTION AND DEBTORS POLICY

UPDATED IN NOVEMBER 2023 BY FINANCE COMMITTEE

The intention of this policy is to provide guidance to the Governing Body, Finance Committee and Senior Management Team (SMT) with regards to the management of School Fees, fee exemption applications and the handling of debtors' accounts.

1. PURPOSE

- a. Pinehurst Primary School is a fee-paying school and parents are expected to contribute to the running expenses of the School in the form of school fees.
- b. The expectation is that fees are payable, in advance for the year, by the start of school each year.
- c. Parents are given the option to settle fees over the school year by way of 11 equal monthly instalments from January to November, on condition that a debit order is signed in favour of the school.

2. SCOPE

- a. Includes all *parents* as defined by the South African School's Act 84 of 1996 (SASA). The word "parent" as referred to in this policy encapsulates the broad definition of this term as defined in the School's Act.
- b. Both parents are liable for the payment of fees as per the signed Tuition Agreement and in accordance with SASA.
- c. Parents are jointly and severally liable for the payment of school fees.
- d. Parents who cannot afford to pay full school fees, are given the opportunity to apply for a reduction in fees based on their ability to pay, using the formula as provided by the Education Department and applying as per the exemption procedures detailed below.

3. OBJECTIVE

- a. To ensure sufficient funding to provide quality education for our learners and to ensure that the buildings and facilities are properly maintained.
- b. To clarify the policies and procedures surrounding the charging, collection and exemption of school and other fees.

4. SCHOOL FEE ACCOUNTS

4.1 CHARGING SCHOOL FEES

- a. School fees are a statutory obligation.
- b. The amount of school fees to be charged annually will be determined by the budget that is approved by the majority of parents present at an annual general meeting of parents. A resolution is passed for the school fees to be charged.
- c. The parents of learners are liable to pay the school fees, unless they are exempt for payment under the Act.
- d. No learner may be refused admission to the School if their parents are unable to pay school fees.
- e. The Governing Body may enforce the payment of school fees by taking legal action.

- f. School fees are payable for the year in advance and are due and payable on the first day of school.
- g. Parents' fee account may be debited with the full year's fees.
- h. Parents who do not pay the full amount upfront must pay in 11 equal monthly instalments starting in January.
- i. Where parents pay in 11 equal monthly instalments, monthly debit orders are the required method of payment.
- j. Bank accounts will be debited on the last working day of the month (not on a public holiday or a weekend).
- k. The debit order amount due will be debited from a single bank account only – the amount due on the account cannot be split to come from more than one bank account.
- l. Separate school fee accounts will not be created per parent. The school will not intervene or facilitate the division of payment responsibilities between parents. Parents who wish to pay separately should make their own private arrangements between themselves to ensure the school account is paid on time and in full.
- m. If parents are in arrears with one or more instalments, then the full amount for the remainder of the year becomes due and payable immediately.
- n. Payments will be allocated firstly to arrear school fees, starting with oldest school fees first. Payments will not be allocated to extra fee-paying activities or any other fees until all school fee arrears have been settled in full.
- o. The Governing Body has the discretion to offer a discount to parents who pay the full school fee before a pre-determined date each year (as set in the school budget).
- p. A Tuition Fee deposit (as set by the Governing Body) must accompany acceptance of places offered for new learners. This amount will be deducted from the compulsory annual Tuition Fee. Should the learner not attend the school, the Tuition Fee deposit may be refunded to the parent upon a written request from the parent, accompanied by proof of banking details.
- q. Payment of school fees via credit card is not allowed.
- r. Only accounts that are in good standing, may carry fees for extra fee-paying activities (e.g. Music, Aftercare or Learning Support).
- s. All extra fee-paying activities fees must be paid via debit order.
- t. Parents who are unable to pay via debit order must apply to the Accounts Officer to allow suitable alternative method of payment, motivating in writing why they are unable to pay via debit order.
- u. If a parent is approved to pay via an alternative method, any costs incurred in the depositing of the such monies may be debited to the parents' fee account. Failure to comply with the agreed terms of payment will result in the account being in arrears.
- v. Where a parent qualifies for an exemption, any non-exempted amount is due and payable as set out in this policy.
- w. In the event of a change of your chosen domicile email address or physical address for all legal notices, parents must notify the school in writing within one week of the change.

4.2 OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

- a. Where an **account is in arrears**, notice periods as applicable to the extra fee-paying activities will activate and your child's participation in extra fee-paying activities is in jeopardy.

Extra fee-paying activities carry a 1-month notice period. If in arrears, the activity will be stopped immediately after the 1-month notice period, if full payment has not been received by that time.

The related cost for the activity during the notice period remains payable, but as soon as the notice period is finished, the learner(s) will not be allowed to attend/participate in the activity and no further fees will be charged.

An overdue account may not carry any additional costs until the account is paid in full.

Once the account is paid in full, the parent may reapply for the extra fee-paying activity. Re-admission is not guaranteed and is dependent on availability.

- b. Where an **account becomes 3 months in arrears**, the parent will receive a Final Demand Letter for payment. This letter will be hand delivered to the parent or sent by registered email or by registered post to the Legal Domicile address that we have on record.

Unless appropriate arrangements have been made with the Finance Department, the full outstanding account will be handed over to debt collectors for collection and further legal action.

Parents are liable to pay all legal costs, including attorney / client fees and collection costs incurred by the school.

- c. In the course of debt collection, any account information may be shared with a credit information bureau by the school or by its debt collection agency.


4.3 EXEMPTIONS

- a. The Governing Body must inform parents of the amount of school fees payable as well as the procedures that are to be followed to apply for an exemption.
- b. The parents must complete a "yes/no" form in which they confirm that they have been notified of the amount of the school fees and their right to apply for exemptions. The form must be signed by both the Principal and the parents.
- c. Parents who want to be considered for an exemption must apply annually in writing to the school.
- d. The Governing Body may request information from both parents. Where there is a valid single parent applicant, the Single Parent Affidavit as provided by the school, must be completed and accompany the exemption application forms.
- e. The Governing Body will treat all applications and parent information as confidential.
- f. The South African Schools Act makes provision for automatic exemption (e.g. orphans). Parents / caregivers who qualify for such exemption (as provided for by the relevant laws applicable at the time of application), must provide evidence of their eligibility for exemption as follows:
 - i. an affidavit;
 - ii. an affirming affidavit by a social worker or any other competent authority; or
 - iii. a court order.
- g. Within 30 days of receiving a complete application for exemption, the Governing Body Treasurer must make a decision, and, within seven days thereafter, inform the applicant of such decision and the reasons for the decision (preferably in writing).
- h. The parent has a right to appeal the decision made by the Governing Body. The appeal must be in writing and addressed to the School Business Manager within 30 days of the decision of the Governing Body. The reasons for the appeal must be supplied.


- i. If the Governing Body has granted an exemption, but later obtains information that the applicant's financial circumstances have changed, the exemption may be reconsidered (fees may be backdated from the point of time that the financial situation changed).
- j. South Africans and non-South Africans who are permanent residents of SA may apply for an exemption. Non-South Africans who do not have permanent residence in SA and / or only have a temporary study permit may not apply for an exemption. Non-South Africans with refugee status may apply and must provide the necessary documentation to prove their status.
- k. Even if a parent receives an exemption in one year, they will still have to apply again in each subsequent year, should they need to.

4.4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

These procedures will be enforced by the Governing Body's Finance Committee in cooperation with the School's staff.

SIGNED: 
Chairperson of School Governing Body

DATE: 22 November 2023

SIGNED: 
Principal

DATE: 22 November 2023