

MANSFIELD RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

FEES POLICY

UPDATED BY SCHOOL FINANCE COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 2018, AUGUST 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten is a not-for-profit incorporated association. References to “Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten” in this policy include both the school and the kindergarten.

The school receives significant funding from the Commonwealth Government, and to a lesser extent from the State Government. A shortfall of approx. 40% must be made up by fees charged to parents.

The school recognizes that enrolling a child/ren at Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten is a significant financial commitment. However, enrolling child/ren at Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten necessarily requires a commitment to fee-paying education.

ENROLMENT CONTRACT

An Enrolment Contract will be completed for every family enrolling children at the School. This form will be signed by the parent/s or guardian/s of the enrolling student/s. The person/s whose signature/s appears on this form will be the person/s held responsible for the payment of school fees for those student/s.

A new Enrolment Contract must be completed if fee payment responsibility alters from that recorded on the original form. Until the new form is received by the Operations Manager, the original documents will remain in force. The school understands that parenting today can be challenging, however where there is more than one parent/guardian financially responsible for school fees it is not the school’s policy to interfere in private matters. Where this impacts on the payment of fees, the school expects that such matters will be resolved between the parties prior to the commencement of the next school term, and that the Operations Manager will be informed in writing of any new payment arrangement.

The Enrolment Contract is renewed each year.

REGISTRATION FEE

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 is payable per family.

FEE BOND

A Fee Bond of \$500 per child is payable to accept an enrolment offer of a place and confirm the enrolment.

If this Fee Bond is not fully paid within a maximum of four weeks (28 days) of the invoice date, the offer is withdrawn. If the invoice date is less than two months prior to the first day of any school term then the invoice is immediately payable in full. The Fee Bond is refundable in full after the child leaves the school provided that all financial commitments are up-to-date.

TERM SCHOOL FEE

The Term School Fees consists of a 'Tuition Fee' and a 'Learning Experiences Fee'. The 'Tuition Fee' covers the costs of tuition, while the 'Learning Experiences Fee' covers the cost of all additional activities at the school. Further details of the items covered are provided in the School Fee Schedule (updated annually).

There are limited additional charges where there are costs applicable only to specific student circumstances (i.e. Musical Instrument Hire, State Bus users' charge).

Note that the Tuition Fee is the only fee that can be subject to discounts and/or bursaries.

BUILDING FUND DONATION (VOLUNTARY)

The Building Fund donation is a voluntary tax-deductible donation of \$190 per student per term to the School Building Fund.

The cost of new buildings/ equipment is usually funded by a mixture of external capital grants (ie: from the Commonwealth Government) and contributions from the school. While Tuition Fees & Learning Experience Fees cover the recurrent costs of students' education, they do not provide all the funds needed to undertake building projects and other capital works. The Building Fund is thus vital to the provision of new buildings, building modifications and new resources. Building Fund donations are either used to directly contribute to capital projects, or to cover repayments of loans for this purpose.

A receipt for taxation purposes is issued in June each year, together with a statement of how the School Building Fund contributions for the year have been used.

WORKING BEES

The Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten, like all schools, relies on parents to make a wide variety of non-fee contributions to the school. Examples of these non-fee contributions include participation in school working bees (usually one per term), assisting as a parent volunteer with camps and excursions, participation in fund-raising events such as the annual Open Day and Festivals, and the donation of in-kind goods and services to the school (ie: by parents in business). All such non-fee contributions contribute to the successful operation of the school, and in building the school community, while at the same time helping to keep fees as low as possible.

All school families are expected to make voluntary non-fee contributions as a contribution to the school community. As a rough 'rule-of-thumb', participation in two half-day activities each year is needed from each family (ie: two working bees, or equivalent).

COMMENCEMENT DURING A SCHOOL TERM

Where a student commences after the first day of term fees will be calculated as follows:

- In Weeks 1-3 100% of the 'Tuition Fee' and the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies
- In Weeks 4-6 75% of the 'Tuition Fee' and 100% of the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies
- From Week 7 50% of the 'Tuition Fee' and 100% of the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENT/S

Withdrawal of a child/ren from the school has a significant impact on the child, other students in the class, and on the school itself. Parents who wish to withdraw their child/ren from Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten are requested to give one full term's advanced notice in writing to the Operations Manager. Such notice will be acknowledged in writing.

Where a student leaves the school during a term, fees due for that term will be calculated as follows;

- In Weeks 1-3 50% of the 'Tuition Fee' and 100% of the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies
- In Weeks 4-6 75% of the 'Tuition Fee' and 100% of the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies
- From Week 7 100% of the 'Tuition Fee' and the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies

TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL

Parents wishing to withdraw their child/ren for a period of time (ie: for an extended holiday, or other valid reason), are required to advise the Operations Manager in writing of the duration of the absence. Fees will be charged as follows:

- Term Absence 1-3 Weeks 100% of the 'Tuition Fee' and the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies
- Term Absence 4-6 Weeks 75% of the 'Tuition Fee' and 100% of the 'Learning Experiences' applies
- Term Absence over 7 Weeks 50% of the 'Tuition Fee' and 100% of the 'Learning Experiences Fee' applies

Absences exceeding one term may be accepted by agreement at the School's absolute discretion.

DISCOUNTS

SIBLING DISCOUNTS

In recognition of the financial cost of educating multiple children, Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten offers the following sibling discounts (not automatically applied, but available to families); a sibling discount of 20% for the second child, 50% for the third child and 100% for the fourth and any subsequent children at Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten.

This discount may be applied to Tuition Fees only. The eldest child in the family who is enrolled at school is considered the first child in every case.

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

As noted at the start of the fee policy, the payment of fees is a necessary part of having a child/ren enrolled at the school. Failure to pay fees can create a serious cash flow burden for Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten and have negative flow-on effects for the whole school community.

OPTIONS FOR PAYMENT

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Each Term School Fee is invoiced in advance (ie: a week or two before the start of each term). A range of payments options are available to make fee payment as easy as possible; as follows

OPTION ONE. Up-front payment of a whole year's fees attracts an early payment discount of 5% (applied to the Tuition Fee component only). This discount is available only when the year's invoice is paid annually in advance by the Term 1 invoice due date (14 days from the invoice issue date).

OPTION TWO. Full payment of a term's fees by the due date (within 14 days from the invoice issue date).

Where either of these first two payment options is chosen, the follow payment methods are available; Direct Credit (ie: EFT payment), Credit Card, Cheque or Cash (see below for details).

OPTION THREE. Periodic payment of fees either for the whole year (40 equal payments over a 40 week period, or for each term (10 equal payments over a 10 week period).

Where periodic payment is chosen, the fees must be paid by Direct Debit.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

DIRECT CREDIT (EFT PAYMENT)

Direct Deposits can be made into Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten's bank account. Details are provided on the fee invoice.

CREDIT CARD

Invoices may be paid using the school's EFTPOS facility at the school office, or alternatively by calling the School Office and paying over the telephone by Visa or MasterCard.

CASH OR CHEQUE

Cash payments may be made at the School Office. Please do not send cash to school with your child/ren, as the school will not take responsibility for cash that does not arrive at the School Office.

Any cheques should be made payable to "Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten" and mailed to:

Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten
PO Box 679
MANSFIELD, VIC 3724

DIRECT DEBIT (WEEKLY)

As noted above, fees paid by instalment must be paid by weekly Direct Debit. This involves instalments being automatically deducted from a nominated bank account. Use of this option requires parents to complete the necessary authorizing paperwork.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT

Any significant financial difficulty leading to a historical fee debt, or any default on current fee payments will require a Payment Arrangement to be negotiated with the Operations Manager. It is expected that all such Payment Arrangements will involve Direct Debit arrangements.

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It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the Operations Manager where there are difficulties meeting fee commitments, and to negotiate a Payment Arrangement. The Operations Manager will consider whether a proposed Payment Arrangement is considered appropriate to the circumstances and unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the school's finances when deciding whether it is accepted. Any Payment Arrangement should ensure that wherever possible all outstanding school fees are cleared by the end of Term 4. The Operations Manager will confirm the Payment Arrangement in writing (by email unless otherwise requested).

Any subsequent changes to the Payment Arrangement throughout the year will require the negotiation of a new formal agreement with the Operations Manager and be assessed using the same process.

The Payment Arrangement is a formal agreement between the school and parties nominated on the Enrolment Contract. The School Finance Committee will oversee such requests and monitor compliance with the agreed payment schedule.

Failure to meet agreed Payment Arrangements without communication with the school by parent/s or those nominated to pay the account may jeopardise acceptance of future Payment Arrangements, or result in the matter being referred for collection.

DISHONoured PAYMENTS

A charge of \$20 will be applied to the account for each direct debit, credit card, or cheque payment that is dishonoured to cover bank costs and administrative processes to reverse the payment and advise you of the dishonour.

OVERDUE FEE POLICY

Mansfield Rudolf Steiner School & Kindergarten recognizes that payment of school fees is a significant financial commitment for many parents. Where parents are having difficulty paying fees, the School would rather keep clear communication going and enter into payment arrangements than to take debt collection proceedings. However, unless a formal Payment Arrangement is mutually agreed in writing, all accounts outstanding after the due date become outstanding debts and can be enforced.

Accounts that are handed over to a debt collection agency, or solicitor, will have all commissions and legal costs added to the outstanding debt's balance.

PROCESS FOR HANDLING OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

1. Where an invoice is unpaid by the due date without a satisfactory Payment Arrangement, a first reminder will be sent with a request to pay in 7 days.
2. If after this period the account is unpaid or there is no agreed Payment Arrangement then a further reminder will be issued seeking payment within 7 days. Any discount on tuition fees, including sibling discounts, may be withdrawn and a \$20 Late Fee may be added to the invoice.
3. If the account remains outstanding a final demand for payment in full within 7 days and a further \$20 Late Fee will be added to the invoice.
4. Accounts remaining unpaid thereafter may be placed in the hands of a debt collection agency, or solicitor without further notice. The school will issue no further reminders and does not enter into correspondence on the issue. All costs associated with collection of the account will be the responsibility of the person/s nominated on the Enrolment Contract to avoid further disadvantage to the school community.
5. If a debt remains outstanding without an agreed Payment Arrangement longer than a term or is referred to the debt collectors/solicitors, the matter may also be referred to the school's Governance Committee to consider other measures such as whether the student/s remain enrolled.