



# PINEHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL

DISCEMUS UT SERVEMUS

## SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY POLICIES FINANCE - SCHOOL FEES, FEE EXEMPTION AND DEBTORS POLICY *UPDATED IN MARCH 2020 BY FINANCE COMMITTEE*

The intention of this policy is provide guidance to the Governing Body, Finance Committee and Senior Management Team (SMT) with regards to the management of School Fees, Fee Subsidy 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 end of January 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, provided 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).
- b. Both parents are liable for the payment of fees as per the signed Tuition Agreement and in accordance with SASA.
- c. 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 Exemptions procedures detailed below.

### 3. OBJECTIVE

- a. To ensure sufficient funding to provide quality education for our learners.
- b. To ensure that the buildings and facilities are properly maintained.

### 4. SCHOOL FEE ACCOUNTS

#### 4.1 CHARGING SCHOOL FEES

- a. 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.
- b. School fees are a statutory obligation.
- c. The parents of learners are liable to pay the school fees, unless they are exempt for payment under the Act.
- d. The Governing Body may enforce the payment of school fees by taking legal action.

- e. No learner may be refused admission to the School if their parents are unable to pay school fees.
- f. School fees are payable for the year in advance and are due and payable by the end of January each year. Parents' fee account may be debited with the full year's fees.
- g. Parents who are unable to pay the full amount may choose to pay in 11 equal monthly instalments starting in January. If parents are in arrears with one or more instalments, then the full amount becomes due and payable.
- h. 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).
- i. 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.
- j. Where parents choose to pay by 11 equal monthly instalments, monthly debit orders are the required method of payment.
- k. Parents that 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.
- l. If a parent does not make use of the debit order facility and elects to pay via an alternative method, any costs incurred in the depositing of the such monies may be debited to the parents' fee account.
- m. Accounts will be debited on the last day of the month. Should that day be a public holiday or fall on a weekend, the accounts may be debited on the last working day of the month, in which case parents will be notified.
- n. The school account debit order amount due will be debited from one bank account – the amount due on the account cannot be split to come from more than one bank account. Where there is a valid legal order in place for the parents to pay proportionately (e.g. court order for maintenance), the parents need to apply to the School Governing Body Treasurer in writing in order to have the account payments treated differently.
- o. Payment of school fees via credit card is not allowed.
- p. Only accounts that are in good standing, may carry fees for extra fee-paying activities (e.g. Music, Aftercare or Learning Support). These fees must be paid via debit order.
- q. Where a parent applies for an exemption, any exemption in fees granted will be reflected as a credit against the fees account. The balance of fees is due and payable as set out in this policy.
- r. In the event of a change of address, parents must notify the School in writing within 30 days of taking occupation of the new dwelling.

#### 4.2 OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

- a. Where a parent defaults in the payment of any fees and the account balance due is **1 month in arrears**, the Accounts Officer will email or phone the parent(s) requesting payment of the outstanding balance.

Notice periods as applicable to the extra fee-paying activities will activate. The activities include, but are not limited to Aftercare, Music and Learning Support.

If the fee-paying activity carries a 1-month notice period, 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 for the notice period remains due, but as soon as the notice period is finished, the learner(s) will not be allowed to attend/participate in the activity. As soon as notice is given, the applicable activity manager will be informed of the fact that the account is in arrears, that notice has been given and that the learner(s) might not be able to attend past the notice period, if the account is not settled in full immediately. Once the account is paid up in full, the parent may reapply for the fee-paying activity. Re-admission is not guaranteed and is dependent on availability.

- b. Where a parent defaults in the payment of any fees and the account balance due is **2 months in arrears** the Accounts Officer will make a follow-up telephone call or e-mail to the parent(s), requesting payment of the outstanding balance.

The account may no longer carry any additional costs. Additional costs include charges like books, stationery and clothing shop purchases – all these need to be paid in cash/EFT and can no longer be charged to the overdue account until it is paid in full.

The learner(s)'s participation in any extra fee-paying activities is in jeopardy. If the fee-paying activity carries a 1-month notice period that was given at the end of the previous month and full payment has not been received by this time, the activity will be stopped immediately. The related cost for the activity for the notice period remains due. Any other longer notice periods given remain active and the related cost for the notice period remains due.

- c. Where a parent defaults in the payment of any fees and the account balance due is **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 post to the Legal Domicile Address the parent supplied us with when they applied for enrolment to Pinehurst. If this address has changed, the onus is on the parent to advise the school of the updated address.

Unless appropriate arrangements are made with the Finance Department, the account may be handed over to lawyers for legal course of action and for collection. Once the fee account is in arrears, the full year's school fees will become immediately due and payable, meaning that if the account is handed over to the lawyers, it will be handed over for the full balance for the full year. Parents are liable to pay all legal costs, including attorney / client fees and collection costs incurred by the School, in the event of the School having to take legal action for the recovery of school fees. If the parent(s) fails to meet their school fee obligations the School may record the parent(s) non-payment with a credit information bureau.

If the fee-paying activity carries a 3-month notice period (e.g. Music) that was given at the end of the month prior to the previous month and full payment has not been received by this time, the activity will be stopped immediately. The related cost for the activity for the notice period remains due.

### 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: \_\_27 March 2020\_\_

SIGNED:   
Principal

DATE: \_\_27 March 2020\_\_