



DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Chinchilla State High School provides free instruction, administration and facilities to students enrolled at the school who are Australian citizens, permanent residents or children of Australian citizens or permanent residents.

Education Queensland Policy stipulates that no fees are to be charged for activities associated with instruction, administration and facilities. **Chinchilla State High School is required to charge fees to students for some of the following reasons but are not limited to these examples:**

- Services, materials and consumables not provided under the Student Resource Scheme and not defined as instruction, administration and facilities
- Students already enrolled in a non-state school who enrol at Chinchilla State High School for a course
- Students enrolled at Chinchilla State High School who are not Australian citizens, or permanent residents, or children of Australian citizens, or permanent residents identified by visa category
- Educational services purchased from a provider other than Chinchilla State High School
- Specialised education programs
- Distance Education instruction.

Student Resource Scheme

Chinchilla State High School offers parents the option of participating in the Student Resource Scheme. The Student Resource Scheme at this school operates under the policy and guidelines of Education Queensland and is endorsed by the Chinchilla State High School P & C Association.

Parents are required to pay an annual levy and sign a participation agreement. Parents must sign and return the Student Resource Scheme Participation Agreement as it is a condition of your child's enrolment at this school.

The Resource Levy is charged to cover the cost of resources for specific subjects, and if the resources were not provided by the school the parent/carer would be required to purchase the resources themselves.

Government Textbook and Resource Allowance

The Government Textbook and Resource Allowance for secondary schools is used to offset part of the schools fees/voluntary contributions. The Principal has obtained endorsement from P&C for:

- Student Resource Schemes
- Non-state school students enrolled in the school
- An educational service purchased from a provider other than a state school.

Where Chinchilla State High School provides resources, the ownership is retained by the school. The school can decide to pass these on to the student.

Where parents choose not to participate in the scheme and provide the resources themselves they retain ownership.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FEES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Principal:

- determine, in conjunction with school staff, whether a student resource scheme is to operate for the school year
- determine, in consultation with the P&C:
 - the scope of the scheme and which body will manage the scheme
 - the textbooks, resources, consumables and materials provided by the scheme
 - the Year Level Requirements Lists and/or Subject Requirements Lists indicating:
 - all textbooks, resources, consumables and materials that a student is required to have for each year level or subject
 - which of the listed items are provided to the student by participation in the scheme
 - which of the listed items are provided by the scheme for the temporary use of the participating student, and must be returned in good condition
 - which of the listed items are provided by the scheme for the permanent use of the participating student, and may be retained
 - the component costs of the items provided by the scheme
 - which of the listed items are not provided by participation in the scheme and are to be provided to the student by the parent.
 - the annual participation fee for the scheme or capacity to calculate a total annual participation fee where a selection of components and costs are available
 - funding to operate the scheme, including textbook and resource allowances, participation fees and pro rata fees, and expenses associated with the scheme
 - any proposed amendment to the standard Participation Agreement Form and/or terms and conditions for approval by the regional director before being implemented in the scheme
 - decision-making parameters for waiving entirely or part of the participation fees for parents experiencing financial hardship
 - action to be taken for scheme items that are lost or negligently damaged or not returned
 - action to be taken for non-payment of participation fees including:
 - generation of a reminder notice to the parent at intervals of 30 days overdue and 60 days overdue
 - exercising discretion in excluding a student from participation in an optional extracurricula school activity
 - withdrawing a student's participation in the scheme where warranted, or
 - excluding a student from the scheme where the student's participation fee is overdue from the previous year's scheme.
- provide the scheme documentation to parents including the standard Participation Agreement Form
- prior to commencing the scheme for the following year, provide to the P&C and, on request, to parents, an annual statement of receipts and expenditure for the current year's scheme
- ensure that the operation and administration of the scheme are in accordance with legislative and policy requirements
- apply the textbook and resource allowance to offset the cost of participation fees to parents of eligible students
- pay the full textbook and resource allowance to parents of eligible students who do not wish to participate in the scheme
- retain documents associated with the scheme, including documents of parents' decisions to participate or not in the scheme, in accordance with the Retention and Disposal Schedule For Records Held in Schools
- make decisions on applications for waiving or reducing the participation fee, based on the determined decision-making parameters
- approve and document agreed variations to the payment of participation fees
- charge pro rata participation fees for a student who enters the scheme after the first week of school, calculated on a 40-week school year basis

- make a pro rata refund to the parent of a student who, having paid a participation fee, leaves the school through the year. The pro rata refund is calculated on the participation fee paid, less the cost of consumed materials and the replacement cost of scheme items that are lost or negligently damaged or not returned, plus the pro rata textbook and resource allowance calculated on the basis of a 40-week school year.
- ensure that debt recovery processes are in accordance with Financial Practices in Schools and Other Centres, the School Accounting Manual, and Debt Collection
- ensure that the student does not suffer educational disadvantage by way of school action as a result of the parent's decision not to participate in the scheme
- continue to provide instruction, administration and facilities for the education of the student where the parent who has joined the scheme does not pay the annual participation fees.

Parents and Citizens' Association:

- in consultation with the Principal, determine the scope of the student resource scheme and which body will manage it
- support the operation of the scheme annually through:
 - a meeting prior to the beginning of the school year, where the scheme is included on the agenda and
 - ensuring all parents are notified at least one meeting in advance with an invitation to attend
- provide all parents with an opportunity to present their views on the scheme
- record the decision to support the scheme's operation, including the participation fee in the minutes of meeting
- support a request by the school to the regional director to amend the standard Participation Agreement Form and/or the terms and conditions of the scheme.

Parents:

- make a decision on participation in the student resource scheme, and indicate the decision by completing the Participation Agreement Form and return the form to the school
- where a decision is made to join the scheme, pay the participation fee in accordance with the selected payment option on the Participation Agreement Form
- where a decision is made to join the scheme, comply with the terms and conditions for the operation of the scheme as agreed to on the Participation Agreement Form
- where a decision is made not to participate in the scheme, provide the student with the items otherwise provided to the student by the scheme as detailed on the Year Level Requirements List and/or Subject Requirements List, to enable the student to engage with the curriculum
- **in circumstances of financial hardship, contact the Principal or designated officer** to discuss how the financial obligations can be met throughout the school year, or to negotiate alternative arrangements that may be available to accommodate individual circumstances, including waiving of the fee entirely or in part by the Principal.

Waiving Fees:

The Principal will determine the decision-making parameters for waiving fees by taking into account such things as:

- genuine financial hardship
- compassionate grounds
- value of debt
- age of debt

Hardship is defined as circumstances by which payment of a debt would cause significant adverse financial effects on the debtor and/or family. Onus of proof is on the debtor to provide evidence of being so affected. Chinchilla State High School will take this into consideration when determining fee waivers.

Debt Recovery - action to be taken for non-payment of fees:-

Debt recovery action can be undertaken for outstanding fees and charges. Some examples:

- Textbook hire and educational resources (including ICT) provided by schools that if not provided by the school would have to be purchased by the parent, for example, photocopies of workbooks
- Materials for subjects where the instruction is extended through providing practical learning experiences in excess of materials provided by school grants
- Charges (other than instruction, administration or facilities) that are necessary for the completion of competencies that are part of vocational certificates
- School excursions
- Transport to sporting events
- Swimming levy
- Hire of equipment, for example, musical instruments/photographic equipment
- Sporting/artistic programs that extend beyond the core curriculum
- Administration charges relating to setting up work experience and school based apprenticeships and traineeships
- Reprographics (other than photocopies of workbooks)
- Arts and craft supplies
- Cooking materials

If Chinchilla State High School has a large number of outstanding accounts it will go about recovering the money by a process of negotiation with the parent/carer. Strategies for recovery include issuing monthly statements, negotiating payment schedules, and telephone or personal contact with the parent/carer to discuss outstanding fees.

A student can be excluded from extra curricular activities for non-payment of fees where the fees have accrued from previous years, or current year fees are not paid/arrangements made by end of Term 1. This may apply even if the student is presenting the money for the extracurricular activity.

Exclusion from activities can be avoided by parents maintaining regular communication with the school and negotiating payment options to meet their agreed commitments.

If the parent/carer has made regular payments but there is still an outstanding balance owing, the Principal will use discretion in choosing to exclude the student from any activities.

Approved and Endorsed by the Chinchilla State High School P & C Association at a meeting held on 17/10/2016