REFUND GUIDELINES

At Talara Primary College, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students, staff and volunteers. This commitment includes the health and safety of staff and students when conducting curriculum activities in the school or in other locations.

School excursions and camps enhance a student’s learning by providing opportunities for the student to participate in activities, both curriculum-related and recreational, outside the normal school routine. All planned school excursions are approved by the Principal and endorsed by the Parents and Citizens Association.

State schools are able to charge a fee for:
- an educational service including materials and consumables not defined as instruction, administration and facilities for the education of the student,
- an education service purchased from a provider other than the school where the provider charges the school and
- a specialised educational program.

A school fee is directed to the purpose for which it is charged. School fees for extra-curricular activities are calculated on a cost recovery only basis, according to the number of students who have indicated their attendance.

Participation of students in an extra-curricular activity is indicated through payment of the fee and provision of a permission form completed by the parent.

As the school budget cannot meet any shortfalls in funding for an extra-curricular activity, due to the subsequent non-participation of a student who had previously indicated attendance of the activity, fees already paid for an extra-curricular activity may be refunded in full or in part or not at all, having regard to the associated expenses incurred and the circumstances of the non-participation.

If a parent wishes to apply for a refund due to their child’s non-participation in an extra-curricular activity, they may do so by completing a Request for Refund form available from the school office within 3 weeks of activity completion. Where possible, the request should include the receipt relating to the payment for which a refund is being sought.

It is preferred that refunds be made as a credit against the student’s account at the school, and used to offset any future charges.

Department of Education and Training policy references:
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
- SCM-PR-002: School Excursions
- FNM-PR-019: State Education Fees

SCHOOL-HOME LINK TO UNDERSTANDING STUDENT FINANCE PROCESSES

Since the roll out of a new finance system mid last year, we have been learning about and implementing new processes that improve and support the school’s student financial management. These changes have had implications on how we invoice and collect monies, which in turn have an impact on how we conduct financial business with you.

Through the implementation process there has been some confusion and questions raised about student invoicing, payment methods and statements, therefore through this Finance Newsletter we hope to respond to any queries and expand on information for further clarification.

Please remember we are here to support you and are more than happy to offer our assistance to work through any financial queries or issues.

Kerrie Natoli
Business Services Manager

DEBTORS

A debtor is a person who has financial responsibility for a student/s. This is generally the first listed parent or guardian enrolling the student/s. Invoices and statements will be addressed to the debtor.

In split family situations where there are two people with financial responsibility, the system has the ability to split invoices according to the identified percentage.

Example 1:
Student, Joe Brown is going on an excursion that will cost $25.00. Debtor split details:
- Mary Brown = 50%
- John Brown = 50%

Both Mary and John will receive an invoice for $12.50.
INVOICES
For all activities requiring payment, a letter is sent home detailing the activity and the associated costs. Our new finance system generates invoices (similar to the old system), for payments to be applied against.

There are some occasions, for instance when a deposit is being receipted, that an invoice will not be generated and the money will be receipted through what is known as “cash collection”.

EMAILED INVOICES
Please note:
When invoices are generated, it is for the total cost of the activity. If there is a credit against your student’s account, this gets applied AFTER the invoice is generated.

Parents who have provided an email address to the school will receive invoices automatically generated through the finance system. Because this is an automatic process, the invoice is for the full amount of the activity. If there is a credit (or a deposit) to be applied to this invoice, it is a manual process undertaken by our office team, after the invoice is generated.

STATEMENTS
It is our aim to send home statements twice a term so that you are aware of any outstanding fees or credit balances.

Understanding your statement:
- If an amount appears with a negative symbol in front of it (e.g., -30.00), this amount refers to a credit balance. For example credits from deposits paid towards Gold Pass Days, Dance Costumes or the credit could be from a previous overpayment.
- Once invoices have been generated for these activities, the credit will be applied against the appropriate invoice.
- If there is an amount left over, as will be in the case of Gold Pass Days, this amount will remain on the student’s account until the next Gold Pass Day activity.
- Credit balances remain on the student’s account until there is an invoice to pay.
- Where the invoice reference appears twice, this generally relates to a BPAY payment that we have reallocated to apply against the intended invoice [see more information on page 3].

Example 2:
An invoice was generated, the invoice was not paid and the student didn’t attend the activity.

CREDIT NOTES
Credit notes are generated if a refund is requested [see Refund Guidelines P4] or as an automatic process if an invoice is cancelled due to non-attendance.

Please note:
If you receive invoices via email, you will also receive credit notes via email.

PAYMENT OPTIONS
We have a number of options to assist you in making payments to the school:
1. Cash/Cheque – through the payment envelope system via the classroom teacher
2. EFTPOS – over the front counter or credit card details can be provided on the payment envelope or over the telephone.
3. BPAY – via the internet for payments of $10 or more
4. Centrelink – see details below
5. Direct Deposit – PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS OPTION. Unfortunately we do not have control of our bank details being provided on invoices. The process to receipt deposits via this method requires personnel to conduct a bank reconciliation and manually receipt the payment. This is very time consuming and if payments are made through this process there is a risk that it will not be processed before the activity occurs.

BPAY
Since moving to the new finance program last year we are very pleased with the number of parents accessing the convenience of the BPAY payment option. Points to remember:
- Each debtor [person responsible for making payments] has a BPAY Reference code that directs payments to the students connected to the debtor
- The reference code is not invoice specific and therefore deducts the amount off outstanding student invoices linked to the debtor.
- Our finance program prioritises payments to be applied against excursion invoices first and then applies it against the oldest outstanding invoice.
- Timing of deposits can vary from bank to bank - allow 2-3 days for payment to go through - please consider this with regards to cut-off dates for excursions etc.
- Our Accounts Receivable Officer receives a BPAY payment report each day. This report is assessed to ensure that the payment has been applied against the intended invoice. If this is not the case, then a reallocation is generated.
- If you would like to use BPAY but do not know your reference code, please contact the school office.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CENTREPAY
Centrepay is a free direct bill paying service available to customers who receive a Centrelink payment. What this means is an automatic deduction will come from your Centrelink payment and be deposited into the school account where it will be applied against any of your outstanding student accounts or remain as a credit balance.

Deductions can be arranged by:
- Centrelink Online Services. Visit www.centrelink.gov.au to register and to find out more information about Centrepay
- Completing [faxing or sending] the Centrepay deductions form – available from the school office. Talara Primary College Centrepay Reference Number is 555091202C.

PAYMENT AGREEMENTS
We understand the financial pressures that families may experience. Please do not hesitate in contacting the school as there are payment agreement options available.