

SCHOOL LEVY POLICY

1 July 2009



Rationale

School levies form an essential proportion of school income. All parents or guardians, other than those approved under the Student Assistance Scheme (STAS), are expected to contribute towards the cost of their child's education. The purpose of the school levy policy is to ensure that school staff, parents and guardians, and the community:

- are aware of their responsibilities with regard to levies and other charges;
- are provided with open, fair and honest information concerning the reasons for any levies and other charges, and the purposes for which money is collected;
- are aware of various payment options available, including payment by instalments.

The policy provides a foundation to help ensure that the setting and management of levies is fair and consistent, and that the needs and wishes of all parties involved are taken into account.

Guiding Principles

- Every student has the right to full access to the school program regardless of the financial circumstances of the family
- The financial information for all families is confidential
- Parents/carers and students should neither experience direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of ability to pay
- There is a high expectation that parents with capacity to pay do so and that the school take reasonable action to recover money where payments remain outstanding.
- The school will take account of the financial constraints on families and determine charges in close consultation with the school community.
- Students will not be excluded from compulsory programs on the basis of inability to pay.
- However, where parents agree to additional, non-compulsory programs and events 'other charges' will apply to all students who participate.

Policy Statement

Levies

An annual all-inclusive fee will be charged for each student enrolled at this school.

As part of the school levy policy additional levies are charged for extra optional activities which is detailed in Other Charges below.

The Finance Committee, taking into account the financial needs of the school and the ability of the school community to meet these fees, will review the level of fees annually. Any changes to fees will be recommended to the School Association for approval.

In making any decision in relation to fees, due consideration will be given to the Department's Levy Policy.

Fees are charged at the commencement of the school year, and are payable according to the school's levy paying options.

Additional levies for excursions will not be made or collected by teachers – all levy collection will be via the school office, with official invoices and receipts for each student involved.

Levies are formulated for fee paying students based on charges associated with the cost of subjects. Students paying fees do not subsidise students receiving Student Assistance.

The Required Levy is a contribution towards, text book hire, audio visual and computer resources, library resources, parent communication, Locker hire Gr 7/8, performances, resource materials for all subjects, consumables, photocopying; IT resources (including initial printing allocation) sports facilities, all subjects (including options), stationery (including calculator, headphones & dictionary for grade 7 only), excursions.

Other Charges

The school may make other charges for all students, including students eligible for student assistance. These cover such items as 'Queechy View' school magazine, Locker hire for Grade 9/10 students, Wednesday/Thursday afternoon activities, additional stationery/printing costs, academic competitions, socials, optional intrastate, interstate and international excursions, optional camps, celebration week expenses and other items outside of the standard educational program. These items are optional.

All other charges must be approved by the Principal. Teachers will not make or collect other charges for such items as optional excursions. One-off collections of other charges throughout the year are to be avoided if possible. If it is necessary to raise non-compulsory charges during the year for such items as end-of-year events or school trips, parents will be notified by letter or in the fortnightly newsletter. All payments are to be made at the front office, with official receipts provided.

Uniforms

School levies do not cover uniforms. Uniforms may be purchased from the office on Tuesday afternoons between 1.00pm and 3.30pm.

Stationery

A pack of essential stationery is given to each student at the beginning of the year. There is no extra levy or charge to parents for this - stationery packs are purchased by the school on behalf of students from the whole school revenue. Classroom bulk packs are also distributed to students in class and there is no additional charge for these stationery items. Grade 7 students receive a basic calculator, dictionary and headphones and will receive a Scientific calculator at the beginning of Grade 9. If these items are required by students in other grades, they can be purchased from the school office. All students are required to purchase additional stationery/printing.

Excursions/Camps/Tours/Sport and Recreation

There are no extra levies or charges for these items unless they are optional. An example of an optional activity is an Interstate Tour or Student Leadership camp, which students may wish to attend, and for which they will be invoiced separately, whether eligible for student assistance or not.

Camps

Camps offered are optional, therefore families are asked to contribute to the cost of the camp.

Maths Extended—Grade 10

Students doing Maths Extended in Grade 10 will require Maths Quest 11 textbook and a Graphics Calculator. Parents can purchase these items from stationery stores or hire from the school at a total cost of \$50 with \$20 refunded on satisfactory return of items. A hire agreement is required for hire of these items.

Student Leadership Board

There is an expectation that all Student Leadership Board members purchase a school blazer.

Food Studies, Materials Design and Technology

Funding for these and other high-cost subjects now comes from the whole school revenue. This is fair and reasonable and in line with the Department's School Levy Policy, and means that students are not discouraged from choosing particular subjects because of the cost. A surcharge is levied for students studying Food Studies courses in grades 7, 8, 9 and 10.

As part of their educational program, students may be encouraged to cost their work within a fixed budget in subjects such as materials design and technology. Students in these and similar subjects may also be offered opportunities to increase the scale of a project or task by contributing additional funding. Contributions on an individual student basis will be an optional Other Charge.

Payment of Accounts

A letter is sent home for all enrolled students before December detailing the expected levies and other charges for the next year.

Parents are expected to pay levies (or prove eligibility for exemption) before 31st March, 2009, unless instalment plans have been completed.

Payments may be made:

- by cash, cheque, credit card or eftpos at the school office between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm daily;
- by cheque, payable to Queechy High School, posted to PO Box 678, Kings Meadows, 7249
- by credit card, with details telephoned to the school office on 63414455.

If parents/guardians are unable to pay in full, they are expected to make arrangements as soon as possible with the School Executive Officer to pay by instalment. Debtors are encouraged to renegotiate any arrangements they may have already made if these were found to be unsatisfactory. If no arrangements are made the school may refer the debt to a debt collection agency.

Every second month the school will forward a statement to all parents/guardians with a debt to the school, or for whom a transaction has been recorded since the last statement, detailing payments that have been made and any debts still owed.

Recovery of Debts relating to Students

Outstanding fees and levies will be pursued as a matter of justice to other parents, rather than for business interests.

Where debts relating to students are owed to the school or the Department the following action will be taken:

- Outstanding 30-60 days – The family statement is forwarded to the debtor, along with a letter noting that payment has not been made and requesting payment as soon as possible. The letter details the flexible payment options that are available and encourages the individual to contact the school to discuss/negotiate payment options.
- Outstanding 60-90 days - The family statement is forwarded to the debtor, along with a reminder letter stating immediate payment is requested. The letter also details the flexible payment options that are available and encourages the individual to contact the school to discuss/negotiate payment options. Where possible, the debtor will also be contacted by phone.
- Outstanding 90+ days – The family statement is forwarded to the debtor, along with a letter stating that if payment or contact with the school is not made, the debt may be referred to a collection agency.

Note – In line with the Department's recommendations it is not the school's policy to refer debts relating to students to a collection service except in extreme circumstances. Careful consideration of

the parent/guardian's ability to pay and such factors as sociological and psychological effects on all concerned will always be made by the Principal before this action is taken.

Under no circumstances will the provision of services, acceptance of students on courses, permission to attend excursions or other activities be used to encourage the payment of debts. Staff are to ensure that students are never placed in circumstances where the non-payment of debt by a parent or guardian jeopardises the expected educational experience of the student. The non-payment of a debt is to remain confidential, between the parent and the school.

Writing off debts

All school debts are to be written off through SACS with Principal endorsement. School debts are then written-off by the Secretary, Minister or Governor in accordance with the delegations set out in section 15 of the Financial Management and Audit Regulations 2003. The school has a separate documented policy regarding debt management.

Students who transfer to/from another school

The Department has recommended, and it is this school's policy, that if a student transfers into this school part-way through a year, this school will not seek transfer of either related STAS funds, or levies, in full or part, from the previous school. It is not the policy of this school to forward STAS funds or collected levies, either in full or in part, relating to a student that leaves the school during the year.

Reimbursement of levies

As levies form part of the consolidated revenue of the school, and their allocation and expenditure is often committed early in the school year, it is the policy of this school that Levies or Other Charges will not be refunded. However, individual circumstances may be considered on their merits, and refunds may be considered in exceptional circumstances. An example of an exceptional circumstance may be the collection of levies for a camp that the student will not have the opportunity to participate in, and to which the levies have not yet been committed.

Students enrolled during the school year

Parents/guardians or independent students will not be required to pay levies (either in part or in full) should they enrol in a school part-way through a year, having already paid levies in full to a previous Tasmanian State School for that year. If an agreement to pay by instalment has been entered into, parents/guardians are expected to renegotiate an agreement to pay the balance owing to the previous school, with the new school.

This school will not seek transfer of funds from a previous school, either from levies already paid to, or STAS funds received by, the previous school.

Students enrolled from a non-government school or interstate will be charged a pro-rata levy.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for this policy. The school will actively seek to be involved in strategies for the identification and sharing of good practices with other schools, the department, and the community in general.