



# School Fee Policy

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**Purpose:** To provide clear guidelines regarding the payment of school fees and to outline the process for recovering school fees not paid.

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**Scope:** Parents/Carers who want to enrol a child at Learning Co-operative, Parents/Carers who have a child enrolled at Learning Co-operative.

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**Implemented by:** School Coordinator (Principal) / Finance Committee, Accounts Officer

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**Approved by:** Learning Co-operative Parent Group, Board

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**Communicated via:** Website, Policy Folder, Enrolment information packs provided to prospective families

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**Reviewed:** Every three years, as legislative changes arise, or improvements identified

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## Overview

Learning Co-operative (Co-op) is a Non-Government independent school, and charges fees for students to attend the school.

Co-op receives State and Federal Government funding for each child enrolled which covers a proportion of our operating expenses. Our aim is to offer affordable alternative education, and we are able to keep our fees low because of the combination of government funding and the high level of involvement of families in the day-to-day running of the school.

Co-op relies on the revenue from the school fees to cover the costs of operating our school that are not otherwise funded by fundraising activities or other income.



The full fee rate for a given school year is set by the Board during term 4 of the previous year based on a consensus decision by members of the Co-operative. In setting the full fee rate, considerations include the consumer price index (CPI), the financial position of the school, and any other circumstances impacting the financial capacity of families as a whole.

## Fees

Current fees are outlined in the fee schedule and posted on the school website.

The fees cover most materials and extra-curricular activities, such as excursions, incursions, books, music tuition, sport coaching such as swimming, and gymnastics.

Parents may be asked to contribute to the cost of food or accommodation for camps that are longer than two nights, particularly if the accommodation is house or cabins rather than camping.

Reduced fees are available for families with multiple children simultaneously attending the school, for families with a valid Centrelink Health Care Card and for families who advise the school that they are experiencing financial hardship.

### Multiple Child Discount

We offer a sibling fee discount of:

- 10% off fee amount for the second child
- 50% off fee amount for third and subsequent children
- Siblings must be attending concurrently.

### Health Care Card Discount

A family with a valid Centrelink Health Care Card is entitled to a 25% discount on the full fee rate for each child.

The Health Care Card Discount and the Multiple Child Discount can apply cumulatively. For example, a family with a valid Centrelink Health Care Card and two children attending the school simultaneously will pay 75% of the full fee rate for the first child and 67.5% of the full fee rate for the second child.

### Financial Hardship Discount

A family experiencing financial hardship is entitled to a discount of up to 75% of the full fee rate for each child.



- A family is in financial hardship if it cannot meet its existing financial obligations.
- Eligibility for the financial hardship discount is based on honest self-assessment.
  
- A hardship discount will be reassessed each term

## Fee Payment

Fee invoices are emailed to the families in the first week of each term and should be paid in full within four weeks.

Families should notify the Accounts Officer immediately if they are unable to pay the fees by the due date, and to arrange a payment plan.

Parents who wish to leave the school must provide us with a term's notice of that decision or forfeit a term's worth of fees in lieu of that notice. Should a family cancel enrolment, term fees they have already paid are not refundable.

Families with an outstanding debt to the school are unable to enrol siblings at the school unless a payment plan has been arranged.

Students cannot attend the school unless all current term fees are paid before the due date or an arrangement has been made with the Finance Officer.

Families with significant or long-term outstanding debt will have their enrolment reviewed by the Finance Committee / Board.

## Fees During Family Holidays & School Closures

School fees are still payable during family holidays or other periods of absence which are taken outside school holidays.

The school is not obligated to refund fees for any periods of unexpected school closure, periods of online learning or cancelled events and programs.

## Roles & Responsibilities

The Board / Finance Committee is responsible for:

- authorizing the School Fee Policy and approving the annual School Fee amount
- approving payment plans



- reviewing enrolment conditions of families with outstanding debt as per School Fee Policy.

The Finance Officer is responsible for:

- Issuing school fee invoices by the end of the first week of each term
- Monitoring payments

Families are responsible for:

- Paying school fee invoices on within 4 weeks of receiving the invoice
- Communicating with the Finance Officer immediately if there are difficulties paying on time and setting up a payment plan
- Abiding by the payment plan if one is arranged

## Related Documentation

- Finance Committee Terms of Reference.
- Enrolment Agreement