

2012 Levies:

Kindergarten	\$175
Prep – Grade 6	\$250

Purpose

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 are taken into account.

Scope

The policy covers all fees and charges raised by Mount Nelson Primary against parents/guardians other than those raised in conjunction with commercial transactions for services rendered on behalf of the school.

Policy Statement

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

It is not the school policy for any additional compulsory levies to be charged. However additional levies may be charged for some programs if it would be inequitable, unfair or unreasonable to require all parents/students to contribute towards an activity with a particularly high cost in proportion to overall levies. Any changes to fees will be recommended to the School Association for approval.

Fee concessions will be considered according to circumstances and the ability to pay, but there is an expectation that a minimum contribution will be made by all except those eligible for the Student Assistance Scheme. Families eligible for Student Assistance (STAS) are responsible for lodging their application form by the due date. Fee concessions will not be provided in anticipation of eligibility. 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.

As far as possible, additional levies will not be made during the course of the year. If it is essential for additional levies to be made, notice of one month will be given to parents in writing, detailing the reason for the unexpected levy, and providing payment 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.

Other Charges

The school may make other charges for all students, including students eligible for student assistance. These cover other (optional) items outside of the standard educational program. 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 where possible. If it is necessary to raise non-compulsory charges during the year for such items as end-of-year events or school trips, all payments are to be made at the front office, with official receipts provided.

Uniforms

School levies do not cover uniforms. The wearing of a uniform is strongly recommended. Uniforms may be purchased at the uniform shop.

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.

Excursions

There are no extra levies or charges for excursions unless they are optional. An example of an optional activity is the Music Camp, which students may wish to attend, and for which they will be invoiced separately, whether eligible for student assistance or not.

Payment of Accounts

A letter is sent home for all enrolled students during December detailing the expected levies and other charges for the next year. Parents are expected to pay levies (or prove eligibility for exemption) before 16th February 2012.

If parents/guardians are unable to pay in full, they are expected to make arrangements as soon as possible with the Principal or School Executive Officer to pay by instalment. If no arrangements are made the Department may refer the debt to a debt collection agency.

Every month the Department 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 attendant 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.

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 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.

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.