



# BRIDGE HOUSE

PRE-PRIMARY · PREPARATORY · COLLEGE

## **DEBTORS POLICY**

### **POLICY DECLARATION**

The Board of Directors of Bridge House School, staff, parents and students – want what is best for the students in the short-term and the long-term. We are aware that parents will go to extraordinary lengths and make many sacrifices to ensure that their children receive the best quality education possible. From our part, we strive to meet the expectations of staff, parents and students. To do this, we need to ensure that Bridge House School is adequately funded so that standards remain high and expectations are met. Bridge House School is committed to good governance with regards to school funds. In turn, parents need to commit to settling their school accounts timeously.

### **THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

To outline the terms and conditions with regard to payment of accounts and to standardise the procedure for the collection of outstanding accounts.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS** – all tuition and boarding fee payments are strictly in advance.

One of these options must be selected for the entire year.

- Annual: 1 payment by the first day of school in January each year.
- Termly: 4 payments by the first day of each term in January, April, July and October each year.
- Monthly: A monthly debit order for 11 equal payments deductible on either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of each month from January to November each year. Parents choosing to pay fees monthly are obliged to complete the school's debit order document upon enrolment at the school. (Not available where the account payer resides out of South Africa)

- The default method of payment is monthly. If no payment method is selected, invoices will be raised on a monthly basis.
- All Grade 12 tuition and boarding fees must be paid according to the specific rules regarding Grade 12 fees.
- Any discounts that are applied to the school account are done so in the same method chosen for fee payment.
- Sibling discounts are applicable to 2nd, 3rd and more children in one family only. Once the eldest child matriculates or leaves the school the sibling benefit no longer applies or the 3rd child becomes the 2nd child to qualify for the benefit.
- All additional charges indicated on the statement received on the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month, form part of the school fee account and are payable on the first day of the following month.
- In the interest of security, Bridge House School does not accept cash payments at the school office.
- Bank charges for payments by way of cash deposits directly into the school bank account and international inward charges from foreign deposits will be levied to the students' accounts.
- Bridge House School reserves the right to correct errors to fees and levies during the year.

### **FOREIGN STUDENTS**

It has become necessary to institute controls for Foreign and Short Term Stay students to ensure that the school receives payment for all services rendered.

Upon acceptance into the school, the following will be required:

- Application and acceptance fees, boarding deposit and the capital development fund must be deposited into the relevant bank accounts before the student attends their first day of school.
- The full terms' fees for tuition and boarding, will be payable in advance before the start of every term. No monthly payment fee option will be allowed for students where the parents or guardians reside out of South Africa.
- No foreign student will be allowed into boarding or to attend any classes unless the full term's fee for tuition and boarding has been settled.

## **STATEMENTS & PAYMENTS**

Statements per family will be emailed each week for the payment of extra charges. A termly statement per family will be generated in the month before each new term and monthly statements will be emailed in the week before the coming month for payment by the due date as stipulated in the fee schedule.

The onus is on the parent to ensure that they receive the monthly account or that they request a copy from the accounts office. Annual and termly payments may be made by direct deposit via internet banking and a copy should be forwarded to the accounts office. No cash payments for tuition fees will be accepted at the school but may be deposited directly at the bank and notification sent to the accounts office.

Settlement by way of any negotiated payment plans must be by signed Debit Order Authorisation.

## **LATE PAYMENTS**

A late payment charge will be levied on all accounts not settled by the due date as selected in the Acceptance of Place form or subsequently instructed to the accounts office in writing. Annual fees will be converted to termly fees and termly fees converted to the monthly rates if accounts are not settled within 7 days of the selected option.

## **COMMUNICATION**

All communication with parents will be recorded on a data collection system. The school reserves the right to record any conversations with any parent or person (s) attending a meeting to discuss the school account. All communications concerning arrangements for the payment of outstanding accounts will be confirmed in writing by the school and sent by email to the address held on the school database.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF A student FROM SCHOOL**

We require a full term's notice, in writing, to the accounts office, before the withdrawal of a student from the school. Failure to do so will require payment of a full term's fees in lieu of notice. Telephonic and verbal withdrawal of a student

from school will not be accepted. This notice applies to all students across all grades at Bridge House School.

### **COLLECTIONS OF OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTS**

- Regardless of any private arrangements, divorce, separation or other agreements, the parents/guardians who have signed the Application Form and the Acceptance of Place documents, accept full responsibility for all fees and charges, due under those Terms & Conditions, unless proper written legal instruction is received by the school to the contrary.
- All procedures and communications concerning the collection of outstanding fees will be conducted by the Business Manager and the Debtors Manager.
- Further consultation in these matters could involve the Heads of the School and the Chairman of the Board.
- If the account is outstanding for 30 days, a first reminder email will be sent. The parents will be given seven working days to settle the account.
- Should the account remain unpaid after the period stated above, the parents will be contacted by phone if possible and receive a second email advising them that the student will not be allowed to return to school after a half-term break or at the end of the term, whichever comes first, until the account is paid in full.
- These accounts will be elevated for discussion to the Finance Committee and then to the Board of Directors.
- Once a student has been excluded from attending school, the period allowed for the parents to pay the school fees due to allow the student to return, will be at the discretion of the Head of the School and the Business Manager, and in the best academic interest of the student.
- The school reserves the right to de-register a student at the end of an academic year should the tuition and boarding fees for any part of that year remain unpaid. The student would not be allowed to return to school at the start of the next academic year should the account be in excess of 30 days. This resort would only be implemented if all consultations and attempts to reconcile the non-payment of fees had failed between the parents or guardians and the school, at which point the contract between Bridge House and the parent or guardian will be cancelled.

- The student will have access to google classroom for the period of absence. It will be the responsibility of the student to ensure that they stay up to date with any academic work and homework that they miss during the time of academic exclusion due to non-payment.
- Once the contract has been canceled, and the student excluded from the school, the account will be handed to the school's attorneys for collection. (As per the Acceptance of Place, the persons signing that form are legally bound to settle the school account and any debt).
- Collections will be allocated against the account in the following order. First the legal fees, then interest, then extra charges and finally the tuition fees. Note that any unconverted portion of the Capital Development Fund Levy will be used to offset any outstanding school fee accounts.

### **CREDIT REFUNDS**

Should an account have a credit balance once a student has left the school it will only be refunded when all outstanding charges and reconciliations have been finalised. This payment will be made 2 months after the student has left the school. Refund payments will only be made via EFT into the bank account of the person responsible for payment of the account and not to any third party.

### **GENERAL**

The school reserves the right to the following:

- To do a credit check on the parent/s or person/s responsible for the fee payments on application or at any time while the student is at the school.
- Not to allow any additional charges such as bus fees, day scholar lunches, music fees or other school services to be charged to the account for a new term if the tuition fees are in arrears.
- To exclude any students from attending any school, sport or cultural tour or to be considered for local or international exchange unless the school fee account is in good standing.

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