



# Runcorn State School

## Debt Management Policy

*Updated January 2026*

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**Purpose**

Runcorn State School provides free instruction, administration and school facilities to students enrolled at the school who are Australian citizens, visa holders & permanent residents, or children of Australian citizens, visa holders or permanent residents, in accordance with Queensland legislation and Department of Education policy.

This policy outlines the school's approach to managing and recovering outstanding fees and charges in a fair, respectful, transparent and lawful manner, while ensuring that no student is educationally disadvantaged.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all parents/carers and students at Runcorn State School.

Runcorn State School does not operate a general Student Resource Scheme (SRS) at this time and does not charge subject fees. The only ongoing fee-based program is Instrumental Music. References to SRS are retained in this policy should the school introduce an SRS in the future.

**Charges That May Apply**

Fees may be charged for approved school activities or services not classified as instruction, administration or facilities, including:

- Instrumental Music participation and instrument hire
- Excursions and camps
- Optional extra-curricular programs
- Replacement or repair of lost or damaged school-owned resources

**Guiding Principles**

Runcorn State School is committed to ensuring:

- No student is denied access to the curriculum due to unpaid fees
- Families are supported through payment plans or fee waivers where appropriate
- All debt recovery actions are ethical, proportionate and non-coercive
- Privacy and confidentiality are maintained at all times

**Payment Plans and Fee Waivers**

The principal or delegate may approve payment plans, deferrals or fee waivers having regard to genuine financial hardship, compassionate circumstances, and the cost effectiveness of recovery. The principal or delegate will determine the decision-making parameters for waiving fees by considering such things as:

- genuine financial hardship
- compassionate grounds
- value of debt
- age of debt
- cost effectiveness and likelihood of making recovery

Hardship is defined as circumstances by which payment of a debt would cause significant adverse financial effects on the debtor and/or family. Onus of proof is on the debtor to provide evidence of being so affected. Students who are at risk of disengaging from learning (e.g. independent students) and students of parents experiencing financial hardship will not be disadvantaged through the imposition of school fees. Runcorn State School will take this into consideration when determining fee waivers.

Debt Recovery and Dunning Process – action to be taken for non-payment of fees

Debt recovery action may be undertaken for outstanding fees and charges. Some examples:

- School excursions and incursions
- School camps
- Transport to sporting events
- Hire of equipment, for example, musical instruments
- Reprographics (other than photocopies of workbooks)
- Arts and craft supplies
- Cooking materials
- SRS levies (if applicable)

### **Step 1: Accounts administration**

#### **Manage and monitor customer debt**

The debt management process is initiated by the school's administration officer who will manage and monitor customer debt by carrying out the following activities which can be undertaken at any time:

- establish and monitor customer payment plans (refer to the 'customer payment plans' section within step 1)
- manage customer disputes (refer to the 'managing and resolving customer disputes' section within step 1)
- around the 15th of each month, perform the dunning process in OneSchool. This process generates reminder notices to debtors with overdue accounts at between 3 and 30 days overdue, 31–60 days overdue and 61–90 days overdue. More information is available on the [OneSchool Help website External link](#). This process involves identifying unpaid and partially paid invoices that are overdue so that debt management actions can be undertaken (refer to step 2).

Before commencing the dunning process

- review the [OneSchool aged debtors detailed by customer group report](#) for unpaid and overdue invoices
- use the [maintenance of open items](#) function of OneSchool Finance to check customer accounts as required
- check all receipts have been applied to customer accounts including unallocated BPAY and BPOINT transactions
- perform end of day banking processes and ensure all lodgements have posted for all cashiers before you commence the dunning process
- check credits have been applied where applicable
- check refunds have been processed as applicable
- apply exclusion codes to the invoice or customer account as required if you do not want a reminder notice sent to the customer (e.g. the customer has entered into a payment plan or has disputed the charge)
- remove exclusion codes from invoices or customer accounts if the customer should receive a reminder notice (e.g. default on payment plan, dispute resolved)
- check that the debt is enforceable, i.e. the school has evidence that the customer has agreed to the fee or charge (i.e. a signed participant agreement form, consent form etc). If the fee or charge is not enforceable, [credit the customer account](#)

- run the exclusion report to check the status of excluded accounts (this report should also be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the month, as part of the customer account management process with exclusions applied or removed as applicable)
- commence the Dunning Process (creating and sending overdue letter electronically to parents)

### **Customer payment plans**

A customer can request a payment plan at any stage of the debt management process. Upon receiving a request for a payment plan, administration officer:

- drafts payment plan in writing
- obtains approval to offer the payment plan from either the
  - business manager for student-related debt
  - principal for non-student-related debt
- obtains written acceptance of the payment plan from the customer (emails are sufficient evidence of a written agreement)
- updates the status of the debt in OneSchool, applying dunning [exclusion codes](#) where applicable
- monitors payment plans.

Refer to [payment plan guidelines for schools](#) for more information.

### **Managing and resolving customer disputes**

If a dispute is received:

- administration officer records details of customer disputes, and details of the following steps. Note: Details for student, and non-student related debt can be recorded in 'customer record – dunning correspondence' in OneSchool
- administration officer provides confirmation to the customer that the dispute was received and will be assessed
- administration officer assesses the merits of the dispute and concludes on whether the debt is valid and accurate
- business manager approves resolution of administrative customer disputes
- principal approves resolution of sensitive and complex customer disputes
- an appointed officer from the school notifies the customer of its decision/any action taken to resolve the dispute. An appointed officer from the school also notifies the Accounts Receivable and Banking (AR&B) unit of the outcome if the dispute was referred to the school after the AR&B unit contacted the debtor (refer to step 3).

Note: For the purpose of managing and resolving customer disputes, schools determine their appointed officer (i.e. either the administration officer, business manager or principal).

## **Step 2: Managing overdue debts**

### **Dunning process**

At least monthly during school term, the administration officer performs the dunning process by:

- applying or removing exclusion codes to customer accounts or selected invoices in OneSchool, as required
- manually generating an 'aged debtors report' in OneSchool, which is used to identify unpaid and partially paid invoices that are overdue
- triggering OneSchool to generate payment reminder notices (dunning reminder notices) to send to customers with overdue accounts/invoices who do not have an exclusion code against their customer account/invoice.

A maximum of 3 dunning reminder notices are sent to each debtor for each outstanding invoice. Refer to [dunning reminder notices](#) for further information.

### **Available options after dunning process**

For overdue debt that has been through a full dunning cycle—that is, 3 dunning reminder notices have been sent—the administration officer will refer the debt to the business manager or principal.

The business manager or principal:

- must refer to [writing off debt](#) to assess whether there is a reasonable prospect of recovering the debt. **If not, the debt must be written off**
- for student-related debt, offers the parent the option of entering a payment plan
- may decide to pursue other additional local follow up procedures (e.g. business manager calling or writing to the debtor in addition to the mandatory dunning process).

Note: Debt previously written off can still be collected from a debtor. For example, if the debtor decides to make payment after the debt is written off. To reinstate a debt, run a bulk billing list report to obtain details of debts that had been written off. Then credit the customer account – Credit Balance Student (CBS) and reinvoice using the exact details in the bulk billing list report.

### **Step 3: Escalating overdue debt to central office**

A business manager / principal **may** request advice or assistance with debt recovery for accounts >\$200.00 from Accounts Receivable and Banking (AR&B) unit in central office if they believe it will improve the prospect of recovering the debt. Please note: Escalation to the AR&B unit is not a requirement before considering write off.

First, the AR&B unit will request the school provide documentation that supports the existence of the debt, such as:

- a signed Student Resource Scheme (SRS) participation form for SRS debt
- a signed permission form relating to an excursion
- a signed hire agreement form for a debt relating to hiring school facilities to an external party
- a purchase order, letter, email or signed agreement form for services/goods provided to a customer
- evidence of dunning cycle (for example, dunning reminder notices)
- evidence of offer of payment plan to parent(s) for student-related debt
- copies of customer correspondence (for example, invoices, statements, emails).

The AR&B unit will attempt to recover debts by contacting the debtor by phone, email and letter.

The AR&B will cease recovery actions and notify the school if:

- a debtor requests to enter a payment plan (refer to step 1)
- a debtor raises a new or previously undisclosed dispute about an overdue debt (refer to step 1). School must inform the AR&B unit of the outcome within 10 working days
- they are unsuccessful in their debt recovery action.

Where the above steps are unsuccessful for debt recovery, the principal must refer to [writing off debt](#) and assess whether there is a reasonable prospect of recovering the debt. **If not, the debt must be written off.**

### **Step 4: Refer debt to external debt collection agency (non-student related debt only)**

Note: Schools are responsible for the costs associated with referring debt to external debt collection agency.

After receiving advice from the Accounts Receivable and Banking (AR&B) unit (refer to step 3), schools may refer debt to an external debt collection agency with the:

- principal's endorsement (email is sufficient)
- Regional Director's approval (email is sufficient).

The AR&B unit facilitates referral of debt to external debt collection agencies. Prior to engaging a debt collection agency, the AR&B unit seeks approval from the principal for costs associated with the external debt collection agency's proposed actions.

If the debt collection agency is unsuccessful in their debt recovery action, the AR&B unit will provide the outcome and documented debt collection history back to the principal (email is sufficient). The principal must either:

- refer to [writing off debt](#) to determine whether appropriate to write debt off
- seek approval from the Regional Director to refer the debt to the Executive Director, Legal Services, via the AR&B unit (refer to step 5).

#### **Step 5: Refer debt for legal action (non-student related debt only)**

If step 4 is unsuccessful, the principal can request the Regional Director's approval to refer the debt to the Executive Director, Legal Services via the Accounts Receivable and Banking (AR&B) unit.

Regional Director can approve principal's request to refer debt for legal action to the Executive Director, Legal Services, via the AR&B unit.

The AR&B unit collect relevant information and documentation for debts referred to the Executive Director, Legal Services.

Executive Director, Legal Services assess the merits of commencing legal action to recover debt and either:

- approve legal action and seek financial approval from the principal for the estimated cost of legal action
- inform the Regional Director that they do not approve legal action to recover the debt.

Principal can approve the estimated total cost of legal action within their [financial delegation \(PDF, 239KB\)](#) if legal action is recommended by the Executive Director, Legal Services.

Where legal action is approved, the Executive Director Legal services will coordinate and manage the legal action (e.g. engagement of third-party legal representation).

If legal action is unsuccessful or is not recommended by the Executive Director, Legal Services, the AR&B unit refers the debt back to the principal who must refer to [writing off debt](#).

#### **Step 6: Excluding students from optional, non-curricular activities**

To encourage payment of student-related debts, principals, as a last resort, can decide to exclude students from optional, non-curricular activities (exclusion) where a parent has an outstanding debt with a school. However, principals **must not** use exclusion where a parent is facing financial hardship (see note below)\*.

Principals can only approve exclusion as a last resort and after all these steps:

- a full OneSchool dunning cycle (refer to step 2) or equivalent dunning process outside of OneSchool
- considering whether the parent is facing financial hardship. Exclusion may still be appropriate after considering financial hardship, if the principal has
  - not observed any indicators that the parent is facing financial hardship
  - requested and the parent does not provide information that supports a claim of financial hardship (see note below)\*

- offering the parent a payment plan (refer to step 1)
- assessing whether to request the Accounts Receivable and Banking (AR&B) unit to undertake further debt recovery action (refer to step 3) if they believe it will improve the prospect of recovering the debt. This action is **not mandatory** before a principal uses exclusion
- documenting their conclusion that there are no other reasonably available actions to encourage payment.

\*Note: Prior to exclusion, principals must use their judgement to assess whether there are any indicators of financial hardship or other extenuating circumstances that make exclusion inappropriate. Extenuating circumstances may include the principal or other school employees awareness of sensitive or traumatic events or circumstances the child or parent(s) are facing. If a principal has not observed indicators of financial hardship or other extenuating circumstances, they may request that a debtor provide evidence why the debt can't be paid. This may include one or a combination of:

- current healthcare or pension cards
- most recent Centrelink support payment statement
- most recent bank statements, payslips or proof of income
- evidence of employment circumstances
- evidence of significant recent increases in cost of living relative to the parent's income.

For example, a significant increase in the cost of rent in a low-income household.

A school may request that debtors provide more than one of these documents to show financial hardship. These documents will assist when assessing the financial hardship claims, however, debtors cannot be forced to provide this information if they do not wish to.

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### Approval and Review

Approved by:



Meg McClure  
Principal  
Runcorn State School

Endorsed by:



Aaron Liu  
Chair  
Runcorn SS School Council

**Next Review Date: January 2029**



## Runcorn State School Payment Plan Agreement

Student Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Year Level/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Purpose of This Agreement

This Payment Plan Agreement has been established to support families experiencing financial difficulty and to enable the gradual payment of outstanding school charges in a manageable way.

### Outstanding Amount

Total Amount Owning: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This amount includes:

- Student Resource Scheme charges
- Subject or participation fees
- Excursions / camps
- Instrumental music / other programs
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Arrangement

Payments will be made as follows:

Payment Frequency	Amount	Start Date	End Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	\$ _____ / _____ / _____	_____ / _____ / _____	_____ / _____ / _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly	\$ _____ / _____ / _____	_____ / _____ / _____	_____ / _____ / _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	\$ _____ / _____ / _____	_____ / _____ / _____	_____ / _____ / _____

Total number of instalments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Method:**

- Direct deposit
- BPoint
- QParents
- EFTPOS at school office

(Preferred payment method to be arranged with the school office.)

**Conditions of the Payment Plan**

- Payments must be made **on or before the agreed dates**.
- If financial circumstances change and payments cannot be met, the **school must be contacted as soon as possible** to review this plan.
- Non-payment without communication may result in escalation in line with the school's **Fees and Charges – Debt Recovery policy**.
- Entering into a payment plan does **not** limit a family's right to apply for fee assistance, remission or exemption where eligible.

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**Review Date**

This payment plan will be reviewed on:

**Review date:** \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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**Agreement**

I/we understand and agree to the payment arrangement outlined above and commit to maintaining communication with the school regarding this agreement.

**Parent/Carer Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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**School Use Only**

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**Notes:**