Fee and Debtors Policy

Date of Approval	18th May 2017
Last date of amendment	Baobab College Board
Approved by	04th July 2014
Implementation Date	18th May 2017
Review Cycle	At least every three years or as required
Next date of review	On or before 1st June 2020
Policy application	All students, staff and parents of Baobab College
Policy Under	Baobab Board Chairperson

Policy Statement:

All the stakeholders of Baobab College want what is in the best interests of the students and to ensure every student has access to the highest quality education possible. Baobab College endeavours to meet the expectations of the students, staff and parents. In order to ensure that Baobab College maintains its high standards and to meet the expectations of the stakeholders the school needs to be adequately funded. Baobab College is committed to good governance as well as responsible care and use of the funds. For their part parents are required to commit to settling their school accounts on time.

Key points:

- Baobab fees are due in advance, on or before the first day of each term.
- A child may only enter class with a fees clearance slip from the accounts department.
- For parents experiencing temporary financial difficulties there is a school approved payment plan option. Any and all arrangements in this regard must be applied for, approved and signed by the Baobab Finance Manager prior to the start of any given term. If a parent is not in possession of a school approved and signed payment plan they will be deemed to be in default of payment if their account is not cleared before the first day of term.
- The student's place may be forfeited if the school account is not paid in full when it falls due. Procedures in the event of a default of payment are clearly explained in the policy.
- Students may not attend school if the parents have not paid in full, or are registered on an approved and signed school payment plan. This will be checked against school records in the first weeks of school, students will be refused entry if their account is not cleared. All procedures will be strictly enforced.
- Please provide proof of payment for all deposits to the school accounts department.
- The school reserves the right to use the services of the Credit Reference Bureau if it becomes necessary.

Objects of the Policy:

- To outline all terms and conditions regarding fee payment and debtors
- To standardize all procedures for collection of outstanding accounts
- To ensure that no burden is placed on the school resources
- Explain the fees structure

1. **Application:**
    - All Parents/Guardians/Caregivers of a Baobab College student (herein referred to as 'parent/s')

INSPIRATIONAL EDUCATION

2. **Policy and Procedures:**
   - Upon paying the registration fee the parents, staff and students accept and agree to all terms and conditions of Baobab College
   - The policy may not be altered by Management

3. **Registration Fee:**
   - A non-refundable fee is paid by the parents upon completion of a formal application for a place at the school. It is a one off fee per student and covers the cost of the initial assessment.

4. **Review of school fees**
   - All school fees are reviewed annually
   - The Board reserves the right to vary fees without notice

5. **Admission Fee**
   - A non-refundable admission fee is required from any parent upon formal acceptance of an offer of a place at Baobab College for their child.
   - The admission fee is to be paid within 30 days of the acceptance offer being issued and prior to the child being admitted to school.
   - The offer of a place is subject to all terms and conditions being met by parents
   - The admission fee demonstrates commitment to the school by the parents

6. **Refundable deposit:**
   - A one-off refundable deposit is charged for every child prior to the first day of entry to the school.
   - The refundable deposit will be standardized and the same amount for all students.
   - Should the refundable deposit be adjusted upwards at any point the increase will apply to all new and existing students.
   - In line with the refundable deposit being standardized for all students in the school, the 2017/2018 academic year will be given as a grace period for every existing student to meet this standardization. Details and payment options may be discussed with the school accounts department.
   - The deposit acts as a security fee to cover school books, equipment, vandalism (including but not limited to intentional damage to school property) and school fees.
   - The refundable deposit may not be used to off set current school fees upon written notice of withdrawal of a student.
   - The refundable deposit will be forfeited if the parent does not give a minimum of 90 days written notice for a student leaving the school.
   - It is refundable after the child has left Baobab College providing that the school has:
     1. Been given a minimum of 90 days written notice of withdrawal
     2. All books and equipment have been returned in good condition
     3. All fees and charges have been settled in full

7. **Tuition**
   - Tuition must be paid in full for the whole term and is due prior to the start of term unless the student's tuition fees are coverd by an approved school payment plan that is signed by the Finance Manager prior to the beginning of term.
   - Tuition fees cover the cost of each child's education throughout the year and are usually set for the academic year, this runs from August through to July.
   - In the case of examination students (i.e. IGCSE, AS Level and A Level courses) tuition fees are to be paid by the parents for the whole academic year and are to be considered a course fee.

- No student may receive their school report, testimonial, examination certificates or sit an examination on school campus if any outstanding account is not paid in full. This includes but is not limited to examination fees.
- Any money received will go to clearing outstanding accounts for amounts accrued in chronological order. Exam fees can only be paid when all debts are cleared.
- There is no pro-rata refund of tuition fees for any academic days not attended by any student during a school term.

8. **Boarding fees:**
   - Boarding fees are to be paid in full prior to the start of term. Flexi boarding must be requested in writing, paid upon receipt of the invoice and prior to the child being admitted to the boarding hostel. A student that does not have a boarding clearance slip from the accounts department may not enter or stay in the boarding hostel; this procedure includes flexi boarding options.
   - A student may not be entered into flexi boarding if there are any outstanding fees on the school account
   - One term's notice for withdrawal from boarding is required.

9. **School accounts and extras:**
   - Over and above tuition fees there are fees that cover extras, these will form part of the school account and must be settled within 30 days of being invoiced unless otherwise stated.
   - All school trips must be paid prior to departure
   - Uniforms may not be taken on account and must be paid in full at the time of collection.
   - Uniforms cannot be purchased by a new parent where there is an outstanding balance owed on the school account

10. **Payment Options:**
    - The methods of payment are:
      1. A 5% discount will apply on the entire year's fees paid on or before 1st August, being prior to the start of term one of the forthcoming academic year.
      2. A 2% discount will apply on each term's fees paid in advance, on or before 1st August for term one, or 1st January for term two, or 1st March for term three, being prior to the start of the applicable term.
      3. Each term's fees paid in advance before the first day of each term, this is the default option.
      4. A signed payment plan, if approved, on application from the school Finance Manager.
    - **Discounts** - discounts are available for families with more than two children in the school at the same time; the 2.5% discount applies to the third and subsequent children.
    - Cash payments are acceptable provided they are paid directly into the school bank account by the parent and in line with Bank of Zambia regulations.
    - It is the responsibility of the parent to provide proof of payment to the school accounts department, review their statements and ensure that any discrepancies are reported to the accounts department immediately
    - All payments are to be made either using the point of sale machine at school, or as a transfer or deposit into the school bank account in line with Bank of Zambia regulations. A payment is not considered paid by the school until it is cleared and reflecting in the school bank account.

11. **Reservation fee:**
    - Withdrawal for a defined period: in order to keep a place during a prolonged absence i.e. a child is not at school for one term, 100% of the fees must be paid for the period concerned.
    - This must be applied for by the parents to the Principal in writing

- If granted the Principal will confirm the reservation in writing to the parent
- This may not apply to any child where an outstanding balance is due on their account.

12. Bank of Zambia regulations

- All parents are expected to be compliant with all Bank of Zambia regulations regarding payment methods and amounts.

13. Deposits, Registration and Admissions fees

- The refundable deposit, registration and admission fees will be applied to all new student registrations.
- In the event that a student has given notice and left, they may return to Baobab College but will be treated as a new student registration and all fees apply.
- If the account was defaulted then admission will not be granted until all past due payments are cleared in full

14. Payment Plan:

- Payment plans for parents experiencing temporary financial difficulties may be available on application to the school management. A firm commitment must be demonstrated as to when and how the fees will be paid.
- Payment plans are available for the current term and are not for past term balances
- To be eligible for a payment plan parents must be
  1. Responsible for the account of any student who has completed at least one academic year at the school
  2. Their account must be in good standing
  3. There is no outstanding debt from previous terms
- Enrolment on a payment plan only becomes effective upon completion of the school payment plan agreement being approved, signed and received by the Finance Manager. The standardized form is available at the accounts department and an appointment may be made through the school office.
- Parents who don't honor the payment plan will not be allowed a further payment plan and their children will not be allowed to attend school until all outstanding fees have been paid in full.
- Unless on an approved school payment plan, signed and registered with the school accounts department, any failure to pay prior to the start of term will be deemed a breach of the agreement.
- Students will not be allowed entry to school in any case where a parent is in default on a payment plan agreement.

15. Procedures for collection:

- **An administration/processing fee will be charged at 6% per term or part thereof on all unpaid balances.**
- All parents will sign an option form for each student informing the school the schedule of payment chosen. Failure to do so will result in the default payment schedule applying, and all terms and conditions therein. This is attached as Appendix I of the policy.
- All fees are due in full prior to the start of term and must be paid in order to allow the child admittance to school.
- The parents are liable for the full term's fees, including when a child is excluded from school due to non-payment of fees.
- Children whose parents have not paid prior to the start of term may not come on to school premise, unless an approved payment plan is in place, and this will be strictly enforced.
- No student may accompany a school trip if they have an outstanding balance on their school account.
- R/D (bounced) cheques will incur a flat rate charge and may lead to prosecution. The applicable rate is available upon request from the accounts department.

- Pro rata payments for children making late entry into school will only be considered in exceptional circumstances (i.e. a child who joins a class after half term) and will be in writing if granted.
- The school reserves the right to report any person who has not paid their school account in full to the Credit Reference Bureau.

16. <u>Procedures in the event of a default of payment:</u>

- In the event that a parent is in default of payment a letter will be sent advising parents they are in breach of contract. The parents will be given seven working days to settle their account. This constitutes the first warning letter.
- Should the parents fail to settle the account within seven working days of the first warning letter then a second letter will be issued warning parents that their contract with the school will be terminated and the pupil will be excluded from school. This constitutes the second and final warning letter.
- Should the parents fail to settle the account within 30 days of the second warning letter being issued then the contract will be considered cancelled and the child will no longer have a place at school.
- All procedures regarding outstanding account balances in regards to communications and collections will be handed over to the school debt collector and/or legal representative.
- All communications in respect of school account collections will be in writing and a record thereof held at Baobab College.
- All communications in regards to payment arrangements of outstanding school accounts will be confirmed in writing, no other communication will be considered valid.
- Collection of payments will be allocated in the order of
    1. Legal and/ or collection fees
    2. Extras
    3. Tuition and Boarding fees
    4. Unpaid fee charges

17. <u>Refunds:</u>

- No refunds for early withdrawal of students will be considered on tuition fees, unless the full academic year has been paid in full and at least one full term's notice has been given in writing to the school Principal.
- Refundable deposits will only be refunded if a minimum of 90 days written notice has been given prior to departure and:
    1. on receipt of a signed book return slip
    2. after all other outstanding debts and accounts have been cleared.
- Costs of any lost or damaged school property will be recovered from the refundable deposit.

18. <u>Governance:</u>

- The policy will be held in the school administration office and falls under the Baobab Board.
- A copy of the policy will be in the:
    1. Accounts Department
    2. Communicated to every parent with the approved annual school fees table
    3. In all future updates of the school handbook.

19. <u>Review:</u>

- The policy may only be altered by the Baobab College Board and will be reviewed as and when necessary. This policy will be reviewed as a matter of course every three years.

Approval history:
Approved and adopted by the Baobab Board on 19 June 2014 – historical
Amendment approval by the Baobab Board on the 17 March 2015 - historical
Updated, approved and adopted by the Baobab Board on the 18 May 2017

Appendix 1:
Payment option form (to be signed by every parent for each student annually)

Appendix 2:
Current school fees