

School Fee Setting and Collection Policy

RATIONALE

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) has a responsibility to make a Catholic education available to all Catholic students whose parents seek a Catholic education for them, insofar as this is possible, while embodying the Church's special preference for the poor and disadvantaged. Schools have a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which they operate to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools. Parents are asked to make a commitment to support Catholic education financially by paying fees.

The Bishops of Western Australia have approved the collection of school fees from parents as a necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policy School Fees shall be considered to be tuition fees, levies and other charges (eg excursions, camp fees, amenities, book hire).

ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

In Diocesan accountable schools, Boards have a managerial role with regard to the setting and collecting of school fees. In Order accountable schools, Boards may only have an advisory role with regard to school fees.

PRINCIPLES

1. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
2. Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from a Catholic school.
3. CECWA shall ensure the financial viability of group funded schools.
4. Schools shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.
5. The School Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.
6. Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.
7. Families with limited capacity to pay school fees have an entitlement to claim a fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality.
8. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.
9. The withholding of access to students of normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
10. Every effort shall be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees.

PROCEDURES

1. Annual fees and charges including maximum increases shall be set by the School Board in accordance with CECWA advice provided during the budget process and put to the Annual General School Meeting. If there is a need to exceed the maximum increase in school fees and charges, the school shall gain approval of the Director of Catholic Education.
2. On application for enrolment, parents will be provided with a Handbook outlining the school fee policy and details of any additional charges and information relating to the school fee concession policy. The School Fee Policy is posted on the School Website.
3. A non-refundable Application Fee of \$100 must be paid when submitting an application to attend St Patrick's Primary School. Once offered a place, an Enrolment Fee of \$120 must be paid to confirm acceptance of a place. This Enrolment Fee will be refunded on the first fee statement; however, it is non-refundable should the position be accepted and then later declined.
4. Fees still apply to students on holiday or absent from school. Pre-Kindy sessions also require payment for non attendance.

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5. A place will not be held for longer than six months unless approved by the principal. Requests must be in writing to the principal.

6. One term's notice in writing is required when withdrawing from the school. Should your child leave once a term has commenced, the full term's fees will still be owed for that term.

7. Health Care Card holders will be given the automatic tuition fee discounts upon presentation of their concession card and completion of the HCC Tuition Fee Discount Scheme form. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a new current Health Care Card to the school once the original one has expired or the discount will be removed from the Tuition Fee account.

8. The level of sibling discounts shall be determined by the School Board. St Patrick's is currently maintaining the Catholic Education WA (CEWA) suggested discount levels.

9. Family discounts will be offered for Special Education Students whether siblings attend the same Catholic school or a number of Catholic schools.

10. You must choose to pay the fees either by:

- One annual payment in Term 1
- A term payment by the end of each term
- Payment plan for smaller more regular payments

If an annual payment or a term payment has not been received, the parent must enter into a payment plan to ensure the fees will be paid off before the end of the year, or see below #11.

11. If parents are having difficulties paying the fee account, then an appointment must be made with the Principal to discuss method of payment, concessions and remissions if required. Documents showing financial hardship need to be provided to the Principal if claiming a fee concession.

12. A timeline for adjusted payments will be set up for those parents who are having difficulties paying fees, with the intended result being that the debt will be reduced each year.

13. School Fee Accounts will be sent out at the beginning of the year and a Statement/Reminder issued at the beginning of Term 2, 3 and 4. Fees are due by the date given on the fee account, before the end of each term.

- A phone call to parents will be made if the previous term's fees have not been paid upon the generation of the next term's fees.
- A follow up letter will be sent if no attempt by the parents has been made to pay fees or meet with the Principal.
- The Principal will be notified of non-payments and a decision will be made by the Principal to present the Fee Account to the School Board.
- The School Board will decide if the school will engage the services of a debt collection agency to recover the fees.

14. Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy and further action is required:

- Documentation will be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees;
- Parents will be notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor will be engaged to recover outstanding fees. All charges incurred by the school in an attempt to recover fees will be passed on to the parents whose fees are being recovered.
- A summons can be issued by the appropriate school authority and judgement entered against the parent; however, before enforcement proceedings are taken, such as a Warrant of Execution, Order of Commitment, Garnishee Order, Judgement Summons etc., approval must be obtained from the Director of Catholic Education.

15. When St Patrick's Primary School office is notified parents have split/separated, the child's fee account and contact/emergency details will be updated to reflect the situation. Responsibility for the Fee Account will be split evenly between the people who have signed the Confirmation of Enrolment Form, unless otherwise advised in writing by both parents.