



## *St Patrick's Primary School Fremantle*

# *School Fee Setting and Collection Procedure*

### **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, while embodying the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged, insofar as this is possible.

Schools have a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which they operate to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools.

Parents are required to make a commitment to support Catholic education financially by paying fees as a necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

### **DEFINITION**

For the purpose of this policy School Fees shall include the total cost of educating a child and comprises: tuition fees, levies (IT and Book Levies) and other charges (eg excursions, camp fees, amenities, book hire, insurance).

### **FEE COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

School fees must be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year.

Fees and all discounts, including CECWA's Health Care Card Discount Scheme, must be clearly advertised and easily accessible. This includes fee brochures, school websites and newsletters.

The principal must update the school community with any changes to school fees to reflect:

- any changes arising from changes to this Directive;
- any legislative changes, and;
- any community socio-economic considerations

On the application for admission, parents and/or guardians will be provided with the school's fee schedule.

Acknowledgment of the fee collection procedures shall be on the application for Enrolment form which shall be signed by the parents. In the case of a sole custodial parent, one signature will suffice.

The following information must be available to parents relating to the school's fee procedures:

- a recognition of the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged.
- details of school fees as well as information relating to the discounts and fee concessions defined in this Directive;
- a timeline for the payment of accounts;
- a process for negotiating the method of payment and the provision of other special concessions;
- debt collection procedures following non-payment, up to and including decision;
- information regarding access to government assistance.

A full statement of fees payable for the year must be provided to each parent at the start of the school year and periodic statements (e.g. per term) should follow.

### **FEE SETTING PROCESS**

CECWA will determine the maximum total School Fee increase and communicate this to each school on an annual basis.

Increases to total School Fees shall not exceed the maximum increase set by CECWA.

Schools wishing to exceed the maximum increase in School Fees must obtain the prior written approval of the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

Annual School Fees must be endorsed by the School Advisory Council during the budget process annually.

### **FEE DISCOUNTS PROCESS**

#### **Fee Discounts**

The following School Fee discounts and concessions may be offered by Catholic schools:

- Family discount for siblings;
- Multiple school family discount for siblings;
- Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount;
- Special concessions and other discounts.

The Principal may, from time to time, request financial information from parents to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.

Families with limited capacity to pay fees have the ability to request a fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness and compassion.

#### **Family Discount for Siblings**

Families with siblings enrolled in Kindergarten through to Year 6 are entitled to a family discount as determined by the principal. St Patrick's Primary School, follows the CECWA recommended family discounts:

<i>2nd Child enrolled</i>	20% of that child's tuition fees
<i>3rd child enrolled</i>	40% of that child's tuition fees
<i>4th child enrolled and beyond</i>	100% of that child's tuition fees

## **Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount**

1. The Health Care Card Discount Scheme provides an automatic fee concession for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. This discount applies across all year levels, from Kindergarten to Year 6.
2. The total discounted school tuition fee for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards are set as follows: Kindergarten to Year 6: \$300 per student
3. These school fees shall be annually reviewed by the CECWA, based on changes to the eligibility income thresholds, and shall be communicated to schools during the budget process each year.
4. Family building levies shall be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee for the eldest sibling as follows:  
$$\$300 \text{ Tuition (HCC)} \times 30\% = \$90 \text{ per Family, Kindergarten to Year 6.}$$
5. Principals may add additional charges for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. These may be levied on a user-pays basis and could include charges associated with camps, music lessons and other activities where there are direct and additional costs associated with such activities.

## **Special concessions and other discounts**

1. The Principal may receive requests for special fee concessions and discounts from parents due to a variety of circumstances.
2. The Principal may determine an appropriate fee concession after considering the parent's financial capacity to pay, the school's financial position and the approved budget for special fee concessions.

## **FEE COLLECTION PROCESS**

### **Fee Collection**

1. Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in a school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.
2. Principals must ensure school's fee procedures for fee collection are consistent with the process within this directive.
3. Schools must facilitate multiple ways and frequencies for parents to pay e.g. debit card, credit card, direct debit or bank transfer; and weekly, monthly, per term or yearly.
4. The recovery of overdue fees must be approached pastorally and sensitively, particularly if this involves legal action.
5. Principals must keep comprehensive documentation of each attempt to resolve the problems of overdue fees.
6. 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 people, who signed the Enrolment Form.
7. Fees still apply to students on holiday or absent from school. Pre Kindy sessions also require payment for non-attendance.

8. The following actions should be taken when collecting overdue fees:
- a) A written communication must be sent to the parents, bringing to their attention the overdue balance.
  - b) Should there be no response within 14 days, the school should contact the parent/s by phone to discuss the overdue fees and payment options.
  - c) If an arrangement to discuss the overdue fees cannot be made, or no action results after another 14 days, a formal registered letter from the Principal should be sent to remind parents of their financial obligations (*Letter 1: Fee Obligations*). This letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the school and a specified timeframe for a response.
  - d) Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter (*Letter 1: Fee Obligations*), the Principal must send a formal registered letter with a final notice (*Letter 2: Final Fee Notice*). The letter should seek payment and outline the possible outcomes if payment is not received within the specified timeframe. This could include legal action.
  - e) Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter (*Letter 2: Final Fee Notice*), the Principal may engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover overdue fees and any additional costs.
  - f) If the debt collection agent is not successful in contacting the parents or in establishing a debt repayment plan, the Principal may consider initiating court proceedings through a General Procedure Claim to obtain judgement.