

“LET PEACE BE FOUND HERE”

St John's Primary School

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SCHOOL FEES POLICY

RATIONALE

Fees for education in a Catholic school are an in-built component of the total funding of Catholic education. School fees are charges to assist in meeting the day-to-day operating costs of the school.

In recognition that Catholic schools do not attract the same level of recurrent funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments as other sectors, there is a requirement to raise private funds.

The major source of this private financial contribution is the school fee which may be supplemented with other contributions e.g. direct parish(s) contributions, fund raising activities and the use of voluntary helpers.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of the Catholic School:

- to charge school fees in order to meet its financial needs
- to collect the school fees in a manner which is just and equitable.

PRINCIPLES

1. Primary schools are to charge a family fee for tuition purposes within the range set by the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council. Secondary schools have the option of charging a family or student fee. Secondary schools may offer a discount to families with multiple enrolments. Secondary schools may charge an all encompassing fee which includes school fees, classroom levies and other charges.
2. When setting fees, schools are to take into account their financial needs and the ability of the school community to meet the level of fees to be charged, keeping in mind the socio-economic level of the community. The socio-economic level is used when setting the fees as part of the budgeting process. The school budget reflects an accurate assessment of fee income after remissions, discounts, special concessions, have been excluded.
3. Schools should provide to parents full details of fees and charges for the coming year. In the final term of the preceding year parents are advised via newsletters, handbooks and/or information meetings of the schedule of fees for the coming year.
4. If any other recurrent fee eg; fundraising, maintenance, is charged in Primary or Secondary schools, it shall be reported as part of the school fees collected in the Annual Financial Statement. For primary schools any such additional fee shall be taken into account in ensuring that the total fees set are within the range set by the Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council.

5. A classroom fee/subject levy may be charged on a per student basis to meet student classroom requisites and subject levies. All classroom fees and subject levies are reported in the Annual Financial Statement as compulsory tuition charges collected.
6. An enrolment/application fee may be charged. Refundable enrolment and application fees are later deducted from accounts to reduce the fees. Refundable enrolment and application fees are reported in the Annual Financial Statement as School fees. Non-refundable enrolment and application fees and are recorded as such in the Annual Financial Statement.
7. Schools may enrol full fee paying overseas students. Receipts from full fee paying students are recorded in the Annual Financial Statement as either recurrent receipts from full fee paying overseas students or capital receipts from full fee paying overseas students. Schools cannot enrol Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) international students travelling on a student visa subclass 571 unless the school is registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).
8. Schools may charge a capital fee to cover capital expenditure ie: furniture, equipment, buildings and capital loan repayments. Schools may transfer their recurrent school fees as capital fees. All capital fees are reported in the Annual Financial Statement as fees for capital purposes. Amounts transferred reduce the recurrent school fees reported and increase the fees for capital purposes reported.
9. Fee remissions should be available to parents of students whose financial position indicates that they are unable to meet the recommended fee. Information on fee remission procedures are contained in parent handbooks and/or promotional material. When dealing with requests for fee remissions, schools proceed with the utmost discretion ensuring confidentiality at all times. Approval of fee relief is restricted to Canonical Administrator and/or Principal. In Primary schools both Canonical Administrator and Principal should be informed of fee remission decisions. Parents making formal request for remission of fees should support their application with sufficient personal financial information to enable an informed decision to be made (Refer Example Appendix I). A copy of the authorised approval for fee remissions is retained on file.
10. The Family Fee Assistance Scheme is available to families eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance in all Diocesan Catholic Primary schools. Although a family may be eligible to receive a fee discount, families may choose not to apply for the fee discount and pay the full school fee. Families that qualify for the scheme will pay \$520 per annum (\$10 per week) for primary school tuition fees. The discount fee covers tuition and capital fees only.
11. Fee statements shall be issued no later than one month after the commencement of each year and are issued on a regular basis thereafter. To assist parents with the payment of fees, schools should develop strategies to facilitate regular payment by families in as convenient a manner as possible. Schools shall offer a range of payment options: cash, cheque or electronic and a range of payment schedules: weekly, fortnightly, monthly, per term or lump sum. Schools should receive an indication from each family as to their preferred payment method (refer Example Appendix II).
12. Schools must regularly monitor school fee collection. The recovery of unpaid fees must be approached sensitively to protect all parties from public embarrassment. Unpaid fees are followed up promptly by letter or personal contact. Guidelines on outstanding fee collection are set out in Appendix III.

For families with fees long overdue for payment, the School Authority may employ the services of a debt collector and/or Solicitor to assist in recovering monies due, when clearly the parent/guardian is able to meet the payment but is unwilling to do so. Such action will require the prior approval of the Canonical Administrator for Parish owned schools and the Governing Authority for non parish owned schools.
13. The institution of court proceedings to recover unpaid debts may only be proceeded with after approval to do so has been sought and obtained from the Canonical Administrator for Parish owned schools and the Governing Authority for non parish owned schools and notification has been provided to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Catholic Education Commission Victoria Financial & Administrative Procedures Manual

Ballarat Diocesan Schools Advisory Council School Fees Policy 2012

Reviewed: 2012

Ratified: 27 Nov 2012

Date of Next Review: 2015