



Fee Collection Policy

Policy Code: SOR - FCP
To be Reviewed: 2020
Ratified: 2017

Identity Statement

To provide a school community that draws on the traditions of the Brigidine Order, that celebrates life, reaches out to others and actively cares for our world.

Vision Statements

St Patrick's Primary School strives to:

- Guide and support students on their faith journey through experiences of the Catholic tradition, building a strong sense of belonging, responsibility and wonder within our school, church and global communities.
- Develop an environment that builds on student resilience, self - respect, confidence and empathy – in partnership with families.
- Foster a learning environment that provides a holistic education that nurtures all learners in order for them to realise their full potential.
- Model and foster a safe and supportive environment for students and their families within the school community.
- Provide learning and teaching experiences that promote decision making.
- Conserve God's creation and recognise the traditional owners of the land.

Graduate Outcomes

We endeavour to create graduates who will:

- Have a dynamic faith
- Be committed to social justice
- Be environmentally aware
- Develop and sustain loving relationships
- Be life-long learners
- Realise their potential
- Be creative problem-solvers
- Be resilient, confident and independent
- Be respectful
- Have courage and integrity
- Be self-aware
- Enjoy their experiences

Basic Belief and Principles

Fees in catholic schools are an essential component of the total funding of Catholic education. Whilst Commonwealth and State government grants provide the underlying financial support, schools will be able to achieve their vision priorities only if Government Funding is supplemented by fees. Therefore, for our school to be able to meet the financial demands of our operating budget, it will always be necessary to maximize the collection of fees from the families that choose Catholic education for their children.

Justice

It is an expectation that families that can afford to pay school fees in full need to meet their financial obligation to the School. Low-income families who are experiencing financial hardship must be able to apply for fee concessions and pay what they can actually afford after formalizing arrangements with the School. Therefore, it is an expectation that all families will pay something towards school fees.

Accessibility

All families have access to primary education at St. Patrick's regardless of their ability to pay school fees. The inability to pay fees should never be a reason for the refusal to enroll a student who otherwise meets the criteria for enrolment at St Patrick's.

Affordability

School fees are set annually. The School is aware and mindful of the realities of the increasing cost of education and the abilities of families to be able to pay school fees in full.

Confidentiality



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All matters relating to fees must be regarded as confidential between the family and the Principal or Canonical Administrator. Students are not to be involved in fee related matters.

Systematic Follow up

A need to systematically follow up unpaid fees where parents are financially capable of paying them without prejudicing the enrolment of students nor cause them embarrassment.

Indicators of Capacity To Pay

In determining the financial capacity of families to pay fees, each situation will be assessed on its own merits. Rather than relying solely on 'objective' criteria, a willingness to engage in conversation about individual family circumstances can be extremely helpful. Factors to take into consideration should include:

- The number of children in the family
- The number of persons in the household earning an income
- The existence of a Health Care Card for the family and if the family receives the Camps. Sports and Excursion Fund for low income earners
- The extent to which a family is dependent on social welfare/social security payments
- The number of dependents (including adults) in the family
- Other exceptional 'Pastoral' situations as determined by the Principal or Canonical Administrator (eg death of a family member)
- Exceptional circumstances such as the loss of employment or the loss of income/property due to bushfires, floods etc

Aims

The gap between Government Funding and the actual cost of operation a Catholic School varies between 10% - 22% in the Sandhurst Diocese and still our schools operate at about 80% of the resource usage of a Government school. It is within this context that we aim:

1. To charge fees at a level that balances the need to provide educational resources and the capacity of the community to pay.
2. To discount or waive fees for a period, in circumstance where payment in full will cause undue hardship for parents / guardians.
3. To distribute Government Grants on a needs basis with the fee collection capacity of schools as one of the variable that determines "need".

Guidelines

The guidelines set out below have been adapted from the Sandhurst School Education Board policy on fee collection:

1. Fees, which include other compulsory charges, should be set by the School Board in consultation with the Parish Priest, taking into account the budgetary requirements of the school and the needs based policies of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.
2. The Annual level of school fees and other educational expenses should be communicated to families as early as possible and be no later than December, to enable family budgeting to occur.
3. Parents are offered a number of methods of paying fees including cash, cheque, Centrepay and direct debits. Families can pay weekly, fortnightly, monthly, by the term, or annually depending on their main income frequency.
4. At the beginning of each school year a statement to each parent of the full account of the fees for that school year will be provided. Each term, statements will be issued indicating each individual's position regarding payments for the year.
5. Families unable to meet their responsibility to pay fees must complete a Fee Assistance form. All applications for fee assistance need to be received before the end of June each school year. Families also need to provide evidence to support information provided in the fee assistance form. All concessional arrangements must be documented and authorized by the Principal and a copy of each arrangement signed by the parents/guardians. All fee concessions granted will apply for the current school year only. Families will need to reapply for the current school year only.
6. All dealings with families on school fee arrears/formalizing of payment arrangements must be carried out in a sensitive, professional and confidential manner. Every effort is made to assist families to formalize a payment arrangement that they can afford and honor.



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7. The school will use a variety of methods to follow up non- payment. If parents commit themselves to a particular method of payment, such follow up should ensure that those who fail to meet their commitments are made aware of this as soon as practical. The shared responsibility of all parents for the financial support of the school is important. Concessions should be offered where necessary. Follow up on a personal basis may be conducted by the Principal or Canonical Administrator in a sensitive, discreet and confidential manner.
8. After personal and pastoral contact with non-payers, letters may be used to remind people of their obligations. As a last resort the Principal may decide to send an official letter, for example from a solicitor, when it is deemed the parent/guardian is able to meet their obligations but is unwilling to do so.
9. The services of debt collectors should only be used when the above process has proven to be unsuccessful, and after the Director of Catholic Education has been advised of the circumstances. If a debt collection agency is to be involved in fee collection the agency should be briefed as to the expectations that Catholic schools have with regard to the dignity of persons and that the school will be consulted before each step in the process is undertaken.
10. For overriding pastoral reasons, under no circumstances should court proceedings be initiated to recover unpaid fees, including compulsory charges, before approval has been sought from the Director of Catholic Education.
11. For philosophical and pastoral reason no student should be excluded from re-enrolment as a consequence of his/her parent's/guardians unwillingness to pay school fees.
12. A review of unpaid school fees from the previous year will be conducted by the Principal at least annually with a view to writing off either wholly or partly debts that are unlikely to be collected. Such write offs must be signed by the Principal in accordance with standard auditing procedures.

Principal Signature: _____

School Board Chair Signature: _____



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NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

RE: Fee Account

Dear NAME

We are currently completing a review of all of our fee accounts.

Currently, our records indicate that your fee account has an outstanding balance of \$##, with the last payment being made on INSERT DATE (INSERT AMOUNT). This outstanding balance includes the total costs for the 20## school year. There are no other additional costs throughout the year. This also includes a balance of \$## brought forward.

We have several options available for the payment of school fees including a lump sum, termly instalments or regular payments throughout the year. However, we strongly recommend the use of direct debits to assist with the payment of school fees. Payments can be made on an ongoing regular basis, with payments going directly from your bank account to the school account. Please contact the Office to confirm the details for the direct debit payment option.

The capacity to pay school fees is not a requirement for enrolment at St. Mary's Primary School. If you believe that you will have difficulty paying the outstanding balance, or your family is experiencing financial hardship, you are strongly encouraged to contact the office and request a *Fee Assistance Application Form*. Please complete the form and then make an appointment with myself to discuss the application and the options available to you.

I encourage you to make contact with myself to discuss this further.

Regards,

Terry Corrigan

Principal



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Fee Assistance Application Form

Complete the following form and contact the office to arrange an appointment with the Principal to discuss the application.

Applicant Details

| | Parent/Guardian 1 | Parent/Guardian 2 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Name | | |
| Address | | |
| Home Phone Number | | |
| Mobile Number | | |

| Name | Age | Relationship to you | Are they residing with you? |
|------|-----|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | Y / N |
| | | | Y / N |
| | | | Y / N |
| | | | Y / N |
| | | | Y / N |

Dependent Children

Income – please complete on a per week basis

| | Parent / Guardian 1 | Parent / Guardian 2 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Number of houses working per week | \$ | \$ |
| Gross Salary per week | \$ | \$ |
| Business Income | \$ | \$ |
| Family tax Benefit | \$ | \$ |
| Child Support/Maintenance Received | \$ | \$ |
| Other Income | \$ | \$ |
| Total Gross Income Per Week | \$ | \$ |
| Do you have a pension/health care card | Yes / No | Yes / No |
| Taxable income shown on last income Tax Assessment received from the Australian Taxation Office | Year End 30/06/ | Year End 30/06/ |
| | Taxable Income \$ | Taxable Income \$ |

Other Information - please include additional information in support of your application including exceptional pastoral situations or other exceptional circumstances.

| |
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| |
| |
| |

Amount of Fee Assistance Requested (families are expected to make a contribution towards their fees, fee assistance for the total amount of the yearly fee will not be granted. Families are expected to make an arrangement for the balance of fees remaining prior to the granting of fee assistance.)

| | | |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Balance of outstanding fees | Current School Year | \$ |
| | Prior School Fees | \$ |
| | Total Outstanding | \$ |
| Amount of Fee Assistance requested | \$ | |
| Proposed method of paying the balance of the fees outstanding (please circle preferred option) | Payment frequency | Fortnightly / Monthly / Termly / Lump Sum |
| | Payment Method | EFT / Cheque / Cash |
| | Payment Amount | \$ |

Signed: Parent/ Guardian 1:
Date

Parent / Guardian 2:
Date: