



Queen of Apostles School

SCHOOL FEE SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

RATIONALE

The collection and setting of school fees for Queen of Apostles School is in keeping with CECWA policy and is seen by the Bishops of Western Australia as a necessary contribution by parents towards the costs of delivering a Catholic Education for their children. As a Catholic school, operating as part of the Catholic Church, we have a vital mission, to provide a Catholic education for the children of all families in our Parish. As such there is an obligation on us, as a school community, to ensure that all families who desire their children to be educated in their faith, can do so without fear of prejudice on the grounds of financial concerns.

There is also a recognition that State and Commonwealth funding, although significant, does not provide all of the money necessary to maintain the operation of the school. We are very much dependent upon the financial contributions of the families within the school to maintain the best possible level of educational service that we provide. There is therefore, an obligation on the part of families with children at Queen of Apostles to contribute to the cost of running the school. This obligation, which shall be termed "school fees" for the purposes of this policy, incorporates tuition fees, amenities fees, various levies and other charges. These are set annually and announced to parents by the School Board at the Annual General Meeting and distributed to parents prior to the start of the school year.

The School Board's deliberations on the setting of fees and charges is based on the necessity to support the school Principal in framing a balanced budget for the following year. An important factor in these budget and fee deliberations is the expected enrolments for the following year. Staffing levels and contracts are based on enrolment numbers and this is then factored into budget calculations. Families that leave during the course of the year do have an impact on the school's budget and finances and this needs to be taken into account in framing the Principles below.

School fees may be paid annually, over the 1 billing period, by direct debit or by individual payment schedules. All accounts are to be paid in full before the close of school in the current calendar year. In the interests of justice and equity for all members of our school community there is the expectation that all families will contribute to the collection of school fees according to their ability to do so.

Recipients of Social Welfare benefits are entitled to claim a concession only on tuition fees as determined on a needs basis. An appointment with the School Bursar or Principal is required in each year a concession is requested. Parents experiencing financial difficulty are asked and encouraged to discuss their position with the Principal in order to negotiate a repayment schedule. Confidentiality is assured in relation to the payment of school fees and the setting of any concession or repayment schedule. This is restricted to the Principal and Administrative (office) staff.

Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy – the school's "Non-Payment of Fees Collection Procedures" will be implemented.

DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 School Fees: for the purpose of this policy statement School Fees shall be considered to be tuition fees, levies and other charges (e.g. excursions, camp fees, amenities, book hire)
- 1.2 Application for Enrolment Fee: the fee associated with processing an application for student enrolment into a school
- 1.3 Acceptance of Enrolment Fee: the fee associated with securing a student enrolment into a school after an offer of enrolment has been made by the school
- 1.4 Role of School Boards or School Councils: in diocesan accountable schools, Boards or Councils have a managerial role with regard to the setting and collecting of school fees

PRINCIPLES

To ensure that there is equity and justice in all financial matters relating to school fee collection, the following principles will apply.

- 2.1 In a spirit of Christian charity and justice the School Board will actively pursue the collection of school fees.
- 2.2 In the practice of Christian charity all applications for fee concessions will be treated with dignity, compassion and confidentiality. Pastoral Care for school families is paramount in all decision making.
- 2.3 Families deciding to leave the school during the course of the school year must give one term's written notification to the office. In situations where a family leaves the school at the end of a term or part way through a term without the due notification, the school retains the right to charge the fees payable for the following term. Where a family leaves the school at the commencement or early in a school term without the due notification, the school retains the right to charge the fees payable for that term.
- 2.4 All information pertaining to parents and the collection of school fees will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- 2.5 The inability to pay school fees will not be a factor in determining the acceptance or enrolment of a family into the school.
- 2.6 The inability to pay school fees will never be a reason for the exclusion of a student from the school.
- 2.7 The inability to pay school fees will never be a reason for the withdrawal or withholding of services to the student.
- 2.8 Any changes to the School Fee Policy will be communicated to parents and the school community at least four weeks prior to the proposed implementation date.

PROCEDURES FOR PAYMENT OF FEES

- 3.1 School Fees and charges are calculated over 1 period billing cycle each year.
- 3.2 School Fee Statement Accounts are distributed during week 2 of term 1 with 21 days to settle payment arrangements for the account.
- 3.3 Reminder School Fee Statements sent to parents during week 8 of term 3, requesting settlement within 7 days.
- 3.4 Outstanding Account letter posted by the Finance Officer requesting settlement of account within 7 days or meeting with Principal to negotiate a payment schedule.

NON-PAYMENT OF FEES COLLECTION PROCEDURES:

- 4.1 If no action or resolution is achieved as a result of Procedure #4, then the Non-Payment of Fees Collection Procedures will be implemented.
- 4.2 If after the 7 days referred to in Procedure #3 there has been no attempt to contact the Principal then a warning letter will be issued. This warning letter will notify the parent of the intention to take further action, if the parent fails to contact us and make arrangements for either payment of the account or an interview to discuss a Variation of School Fees Schedule within 14 days of the date of the letter.
- 4.3 If after the further 7 days there has been no attempt to contact the Principal then a second warning letter will be issued. This second warning letter will notify the parent of the intention to refer the matter to a debt collection agency, if the parent fails to contact us and make arrangements for either payment of the account or an interview to discuss a Variation of School Fees Schedule within 7 days of the date of the letter.
- 4.4 If the parent has failed to contact the school within 7 days from the date of the second warning letter, then the Principal will consult with the relevant personnel at the CEO as to the intention to refer the matter to a debt collection agency.
- 4.5 The Principal shall then refer the matter to a debt collection agency, seeking recovery of fees outstanding along with recovery costs.
- 4.6 Subsequent to the matter being dealt with and resolved by the debt collection agency, the school shall make all reasonable attempts to contact the family to arrange a meeting to discuss how such a situation may be avoided in the future. A Letter of Agreement between the School and the family, signed by both parties, would be the outcome of such a meeting.