



ST JOHN'S SCHOOL

ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL - SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

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Policy Area:	Stewardship
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1. 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 preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Mandate page 50).¹ 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.

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.

2. Definitions

2.1 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)

2.2 Application for Enrolment Fee:

- the fee associated with processing an application for student enrolment into a school

2.3 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

2.4 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

3. Principles

3.1 The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.

3.2 Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from St John's School.

3.3 The CECWA shall ensure the financial viability of group funded schools.

3.4 The St John's School Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.

3.5 St John's School shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.
- 3.8 The withholding of access to students of normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
- 3.9 Every effort shall be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees.
- 3.10 Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

4. Procedures

1. Annual fees and charges including maximum increases will be set by the School Board in accordance with CECWA advice provided during the budget process each year.
2. Upon enrolment, a schedule of all fees and costs for the education of their child at St John's School will be provided to the parents.
3. Fees and charges for the following year will be announced at the AGM of the St John's School Board held in November each year. A new fee schedule will be distributed to parents following the AGM each year.
4. Family discounts for the tuition portion of fees are available for second and third children. Tuition for the fourth child is free. Discounts apply to family members in Pre-Primary to Year 6. Special Education students will receive the same family discounts whether primary aged siblings attend St John's School or another Catholic primary school.
5. Within the first two weeks of first term an Annual Fees account will be sent to all parents via the eldest child. The account will contain the total of all fees payable for the year for each child. Parents will be given the option to pay one annual fee amount with a 5% discount if payment within the first four weeks, or four term amounts. Term accounts must be paid within two weeks of receipt. Payments by direct debit may be made weekly or fortnightly.
6. Payment options available are cash, cheque, Direct Debit, Centrepay deductions or EFTPOS.
7. Families applying for fees assistance will be asked to complete an 'Application for Variation to School Fees' including all sources of income and reasons for the application. Each application will be viewed in the spirit of the Principles outlined in this policy.
8. As the School Board has a responsibility for the collection of school fees the following action will be taken to collect outstanding monies
 - Reminder statements will be forwarded after two weeks, followed by an overdue letter two weeks later.
 - Prior to the end of term a further request for payment will be made. Families will be reminded that those experiencing financial hardship should contact the Principal to discuss alternative arrangements.
 - Families with accounts in default for two terms will be contacted by letter requesting immediate payment or offering an interview with the Principal to discuss payment options.

- If there is no response a further letter will be sent requiring the parents to attend an interview with the Principal. A phone call may be made to follow up with an appointment time.

10. Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy, the following action will occur.

- Parents will be advised by letter that their account may be placed in the hands of a collection agent.
- If there is no response within a week, then a letter will be sent to parents advising them of when their account will be placed in the hands of a collection agent.
- At this stage legal action in accordance with the CECWA School Fees Policy may be necessary. Parents will be advised of any further action.

6. References

¹Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009 - 2015

7. Related Documents

ACCC, Trade Practices Act (TPA)

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)

Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) Debt Collection Guideline: for collectors and creditors