



# St Joseph's School

## SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION

Original Policy: December 2002

Reviewed: 2012

Reviewed: 2014

Due for Review: 2016

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This statement is used in conjunction with the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Policy Statement – School Fees and Collection of Payment – 1999

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### **RATIONALE**

The collection of school fees by St Joseph's School Board shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice. The Board recognises the Catholic Church's responsibility to make a Catholic education available to all students whose parents seek a Catholic education for them, insofar as this is possible, while embodying the Church's special preference for the poor and disadvantaged.

There is also a recognition that State and Commonwealth funding does not provide all of the money necessary to maintain the operation of the school. In order to maintain the best possible level of educational service for our students, we are dependent upon the financial contributions of the families within the school. There is therefore an obligation on the part of families with children at St Joseph's to contribute to the cost of running the school. This obligation, termed "school fees" for the purpose of this policy, incorporates tuition fees, amenities fees, various levies and other charges. 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.

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.

### **Definitions**

- **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).

- **Application for Enrolment Fee:**

The fee associated with lodging an application for enrolment into the school. This fee of \$20 is non refundable

- **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. At St Joseph's this fee is deducted from the first terms fees. For families who withdraw their children prior to the school term beginning, this fee will not be refunded.

- **Role of School Boards or School Councils:**

In diocesan accountable schools, Boards or Councils have a managerial role with regards to the setting and collecting of school fees.

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#### **PRINCIPLES:**

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

1. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
2. The inability to pay school fees will not be a factor in determining the acceptance or enrolment of a family into the school.
3. The inability to pay school fees will never be a reason for the exclusion of a student from the school.
4. The inability to pay school fees will never be a reason for the withdrawal or withholding of services to the student. Where there is genuine economic hardship, arrangements shall be made accordingly through the Principal so that children are not disadvantaged.
5. In a spirit of Christian charity and justice, the School Board will actively pursue the collection of school fees by those families with the capacity to pay.
6. In the practice of Christian charity, all applications for fee concessions will be treated with dignity, compassion and confidentiality.
7. All information pertaining to parents and the collection of school fees will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
8. School fees are jointly and separately payable by parents. That is both parents are responsible for school fees unless there are custody orders that indicate otherwise or at the discretion of the Principal, given other information.
9. The CECWA decision regarding automatic tuition fee discounts for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards shall be implemented.
10. Any changes to the School Fee Policy will generally be communicated to parents and the school community at the combined School Board and P&F AGM in November, or at least four weeks prior to the proposed implementation date.
11. The School Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.
12. The School Board shall ensure that in setting the school fees each year, they do not exceed the recommended increase set by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia.
13. On application for admission parents and/or guardians will be provided with the school's fee policy (any clarification needed by the parents and/or guardians about the school's fee policy shall be given at the initial enrolment interview). Acknowledgement of the fee collection procedures shall be on the 'Application for Enrolment' form which shall be signed by both parents and/or guardians. In the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian, one signature will suffice.

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#### **FEE SETTING**

1. The St Joseph's School Board endeavours to keep all fees to a minimum. Recommended percentage increases are advised by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia in Term 4 of each year.

2. All fees and levies are charged in Term One. These are amenities, excursions, speech, ICT, Athletics, Reading Eggs and dance. Amenities fees cover the cost of items such as bulk classroom order, photocopying, curriculum costs such as purchase of resources and graduation and end of year concert costs.
  3. The Building Levy and P & F Levy is charged out in Term One and is a per family charge.
  4. An Application for Enrolment Fee of \$20 is charged for each application lodged. This is non-refundable.
  5. As stipulated by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, the following sibling discount level at St Joseph's School is:
    - 1st child enrolled 0%
    - 2nd child enrolled 20% of that child's tuition fee
    - 3rd child enrolled 40% of that child's tuition fee
    - 4th child enrolled 100% of that child's tuition fee
  6. Sibling discounts apply to Kindergarten students.
  7. The CECWA decision regarding automatic tuition fee discounts for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards has been implemented. The fee level shall be communicated to schools by the Catholic Education Office during the budget process each year.
  8. The Principal may from time to time request financial information from families to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
  9. A Family discount is offered for Special Education students whether siblings attend the same Catholic school or a number of Catholic schools.
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#### **PROCEDURE FOR PAYMENT OF SCHOOL FEES**

1. Annual School fee accounts will be sent out during the first two weeks of the year and during week two of Terms Two and Three.
2. School fees may be paid on a weekly, fortnightly, monthly, term or annual basis. All fees must be paid in full by week five of Term Three.
3. Families who elect not to enter into a direct debit or pay their fees in full, must pay their Term Fee Account by week five of the term in which they are issued.
4. Fees may be paid by the following options at the school office:

**OPTION 1:** Payment in full by 31st March.

**OPTION 2:** Direct Debit – fees paid directly from your Bank to the School account in weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly payments. The Catholic Development Fund has set up special Fees – Free Account for parents who wish to use this service. Please call the office for details.

**OPTION 3:** Term payments – due by the 5th Friday of Terms One, Two and Three.

5. Any parent seeking relief or concession or a variation of their school fees is encouraged to contact the Principal to discuss the matter and complete a Variation of School Fee Schedule.
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#### **PROCEDURE FOR INSUFFICIENT PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

1. Many families utilise the ability to pay School Fees through a Direct Debit from their bank account. When these Direct Debit arrangements run for many years, or the family has further children attending the School, the amount deducted may become insufficient to cover the fees due.
  2. Following the issue of the Annual Fee Account in Week Two of Semester One, the Finance Officer will review that the amount paid by families on a Direct Debit arrangement is sufficient to cover that year's fees.
  3. Where the amount is not sufficient, the Finance Officer will write to the person responsible for the payment of the account advising of the need to review the amount paid and suggest a new amount for deduction. This letter also offers the ability to meet with the Principal should circumstances warrant a discussion over the inability to support an increased payment amount.
  4. If after seven days no response is received to the letter, the Finance Officer will telephone the person responsible for the fees to ensure the account has been received, request payment and discuss the options available to pay the account.
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#### **PROCEDURE FOR PAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOL FEES**

Families experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to communicate with the Principal as soon as possible.

1. Annual School Fee accounts will be sent out during the first two weeks of the year and during week two of Terms Two and Three.
2. Term fee accounts are to be paid by week five of the term in which they are issued.
3. If payment has not been received by the commencement of week six, a reminder account will be issued. Parents have 14 days from the date of the reminder account in which to either pay the account or contact the Principal to discuss an application for a Variation of School Fees Schedule. The onus is on the parent to initiate contact with the Principal.
4. If payment, or contact with the Principal, has not been made by the commencement of week eight, a first and final letter will be issued. This letter will notify the parents/guardians of the intention to take further action, if the parent fails to pay the account or contact the Principal to discuss a Variation of School Fees Schedule within 7 days of the date of the letter.
5. If, at the end of that 7 day period, (week nine) payment has not been made or there has been no contact with the Principal to discuss a Variation of School Fees Schedule, the Principal or the Finance Officer, without notice, may seek recovery through its Debt Collection Agency. Parents/guardians will be liable for any legal costs and commissions incurred through recovery of the debt.
6. Weeks refers to school weeks of that current term.
7. The Finance Officer will review all school fee accounts on a monthly basis.

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. If families are experiencing financial difficulty, some discount may be agreed upon. Discounts apply solely to tuition fees. This will be determined at the discretion of the Principal.
2. There are occasions when the Principal, because of extenuating circumstances, may waive the school fees for a period of time.
3. Concession agreements are reviewed monthly.
4. When students are away from school on a long-term basis, i.e., more than five weeks because of holiday, sickness etc., families are still billed until they return to full time school. All fee components during the period of absenteeism are still charged. This process enables the school to meet its projected annual financial obligations and standing costs.

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## **NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL**

1. If you wish to withdraw your child from the school you will need to give at least the equivalent of one term's notice (10 weeks), otherwise the full term fees may be requested to be paid.
2. If you wish to withdraw your child temporarily from the school, but reserve your position for your child's return, you may do so for a maximum of two full terms (or equivalent) on payment of the full term fees. The equivalent of one term's notice of your intentions will be required.
3. In the case where notice given to leave the school is less than ten weeks, the school reserves the right to charge a term's fee in lieu of notice.
4. When a parent wishes to remove their child permanently from school during a school year, all levy payments and other charges will be non-refundable.
5. In the event of the school fees having been prepaid for a full year, and sufficient notice is given, a pro rata rebate of the tuition fee component will be reimbursed.
6. Any outstanding fees must be paid in full prior to departure.

Should a family wish to lodge a dispute, this is to be done in accordance with the Dispute and Complaints Resolution Policy.



# St Joseph's School

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## STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

### VARIATION OF SCHOOL FEES SCHEDULE

Please complete all sections as fully as possible. This information is to be kept strictly confidential.

1. **Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Christian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (mobile)
5. **Please detail your reasons for seeking this variation in school fees:**

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I accept the above and declare that the information I have provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

The Principal, on behalf of the School Board, has agreed to accept the weekly/fortnightly/monthly payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ for the duration of this year unless the financial circumstances of the family improve.

**Signature of Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

This will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_