



ST PIUS X CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

School Fees: Setting and Collection:
1999
Revised: 2006
Revised: 2009
Reviewed 2016
Revised November, 2017

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, while embodying the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Mandate, p 50), insofar as this is possible.

Schools are reminded that it is essential to minimise potential barriers for parents such as fees and other costs (Mandate, p 7), and to keep costs to parents as low as possible (Mandate p, 38). Schools need to avoid material ambitions that might lead to higher fees and force them into giving counter-witness (Mandate, p. 22).

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 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 include the total cost of educating a child and comprises: tuition fees; levies (e.g. curriculum levies, or IT levies); and other charges (e.g. book hire, insurance, compulsory excursions, camp fees, amenities, building levies, etc.).

A copy of the St Pius X School Fees is available on the school website.

Application Fee:

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

Application for Enrolment Fee at St Pius X School will be \$50 per family and shall be non refundable.

Enrolment Deposit:

- school fees paid in advance as a deposit, associated with securing a student enrolment into a school, after an offer of enrolment has been made by the school.

Acceptance of Enrolment fees at St Pius X School will be \$150 and this will be deducted from the first term's fees in the year of enrolment. If the child is withdrawn for any reason this amount is non-refundable.

Role of School Boards

At St Pius X School the Board is responsible for the financial management of the school, including the setting and collecting of school fees in accordance with the policies and guidelines of the CECWA.

PRINCIPLES

1. St Pius X School shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community, in the context of the policy rationale.
2. Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from St Pius X School.
3. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
4. The withholding of access to students from normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
5. 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.
6. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.
7. The confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees shall be maintained, as mandated in legislation.
8. Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

PROCEDURES

- At St Pius X School, Fees and all discounts, including CECWA's Health Care Card Discount Scheme are announced at the Annual Community Meeting in November each year and advised through the school Newsletter immediately after this meeting and again at the commencement of the following year.
- A standard schedule of Fees is posted on the school website.
- A copy of the Fees Policy is available on the school website.
- At St Pius the Board have opted to charge Fees annum. Charges for incursions/excursion and extra items will also be charged annually. Statement of Fees should be paid as follows:
Four equal instalments (25% of total fees) to be paid by:
End of February; end of May; end of August: end of October - unless alternative arrangements have been made.
- Reminders for outstanding Fees will be sent via email, this will be followed up by a phone call if not paid within 2 weeks of reminder.
- Please refer to Fee Collection in this policy for more information regarding collection of outstanding fees.
- The Principal may, from time to time, request financial information from families to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.

- Families that are holders of an eligible means-tested family concession card are simply required to provide evidence that their card is valid for the duration of the academic year.
- On application for admission, parents and/or guardians will be advised that a copy of the school's fee policy is available on the school website. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with this as Application for Enrolment signed by parents is acknowledging that they accept the St Pius X School fees and payment and collection procedure. The application form should be signed by both parents but in the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian, one signature will suffice.

Fee Setting

Annual school fees shall be set by the School Board during the budget process each year. Increases to total school fees shall be in accordance with the maximum increase parameters annually set by the CECWA.

Diocesan accountable schools wishing to exceed the maximum increase in school fees shall obtain the prior written approval of the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

Order accountable schools for which the CECWA is their Approved Authority that wish to exceed the maximum increase in total school fees shall first consult with the Executive Director of Catholic Education, before obtaining written approval of the Congregational Leader.

Order accountable schools which are their Own Approved Authority that wish to exceed the maximum increase in total school fees shall first obtain the written approval of the Congregational Leader and inform the Executive Director of Catholic Education in writing.

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.

The CECWA introduced the Health Care Card Discount Scheme in 2005 to provide an automatic fee concession for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. This discount shall be implemented across all year levels, from Kindergarten Year 12. The total discounted school fees for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards are set as follows:

HCC Fees

Kindergarten to Year 6	\$300 per student
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These school fees shall be annually reviewed by the CECWA, based on changes to the eligibility income thresholds, and shall be communicated to schools by the CEWA office during the budget process each year. Family building levies shall be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee.

Building Levy for HCC

Kindergarten to Year 6	30% of HCC fee	\$90 per family
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St Pius X School will charge for certain specific additional charges for holders of eligible means-tested family concession cards. These will be levied on a user-pays basis and could include charges associated camps, music lessons and other activities where there are direct and additional costs associated with such activities.

St Pius X School will keep these costs to a minimum, within the spirit and intent of this policy, and to assist those families who encounter difficulties in meeting these additional charges.

Discounts for families

Families with siblings enrolled in Kindergarten through to Year 6 at St Pius X School are entitled to a level of family discount that shall be determined by each School Board. At St Pius X School the following family discounts levels will apply:

2 nd child enrolled	20% of that child's tuition fees
3 rd child enrolled	40% of that child's tuition fees
4 th child enrolled	100% of that child's tuition fees

Kindergarten fees shall be charged as a proportion of the respective Year 1 fee. The specific proportion shall be equal to the FTE of the Kindergarten program that the school runs. St Pius X School is working towards this commencing in 2018.

All students and families are eligible for family discounts, including families who receive automatic tuition fee discounts as holders of eligible means tested family concession cards.

St Pius X School will ensure that the usual family discounts are offered for Special Education students whether siblings attend the same Catholic school or a number of Catholic schools.

Withdrawal of Students - The Principal must be given a full term's notice in writing prior to the student's withdrawal. Without such notice, the school reserves the right to charge a term's fees in lieu of notice.

Fee Collection

Catholic schools are required to develop strategies for fee collection that are consistent with the principles of this policy.

Fees and their payment will be discussed with parents at the time of enrolment. Relevant information on school fees and the specific school policy shall be made available at that time;

At St Pius X School you can pay Fees by: BPAY; cheque, cash; debit or credit cards, direct debit or bank transfer. Parents can contact the school to set up frequency of payments of fees.

The case of parents who are able but unwilling to pay fees can be problematic for schools. Every effort must be made to help parents understand their obligations as a matter of justice to the whole school community. The recovery of unpaid fees, particularly if this involves legal action, must be approached humanely and sensitively to protect the child as much as possible from the public embarrassment that could arise.

The steps to be taken in relation to the collection of unpaid fees are as follows:

A written communication shall be sent to the parents, bringing promptly to their attention the outstanding balance.

Should there be no response within 14 days, an appropriate person(s) shall approach the parents on a personal basis, in a sensitive, discreet and confidential manner.

If the personal approach cannot be made, or no action results from it within another 14 days, a formal letter from the school Principal should be used to remind parents of their financial obligations. This letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the school and a specified timeframe for a response.

Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter, the school Principal shall send a formal letter with a final notice, seeking payment and outlining the possible outcomes, including legal action, which could occur if payment is not received within the specified timeframe.

If, despite this last letter, there is no response or action the school Board may approve to engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover outstanding fees and any additional costs.

In the event that debt collection agent is not successful in contacting the parents or in establishing a debt repayment plan, schools may consider initiating court proceedings. Before this is done, schools shall inform in writing the Executive Director of Catholic.

Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, such as a Property Seizure and Sale Order, Earnings Appropriation Order, or any other enforcement action, including the launching of a caveat on a property, schools shall obtain written approval from the Executive Director of Catholic Education (diocesan accountable schools).

Schools shall keep comprehensive documentation of each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees.

Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in a school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.

REFERENCES Bishops of Western Australia 2009, *Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015.*