



Whitford Catholic Primary School

SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

Review: 2018

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 Whitford Catholic Primary School has a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which the school operates to parents enrolling their children in the school. 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.

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 processing an application for student enrolment into a school

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.

PRINCIPLES

- The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
- Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from Whitford Catholic Primary School.
- The CECWA shall ensure the financial viability of group funded schools.
- The Whitford Catholic Primary School Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.
- Whitford Catholic Primary School ensures that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.
- 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 Principal may from time to time request financial information from families to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
- Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.
- The withholding of access to students of normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
- Every effort shall be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees.

- Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

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. Application for Enrolment fees are set at \$30 per child and is non-refundable.
3. Acceptance of Enrolment fees are applicable to all Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten applications and other applications as directed by the Principal. Pre-Kindergarten Acceptance of Enrolment fees are \$200 per child and Kindergarten is \$100 per child. This amount is deducted from the first semester's tuition fees in the year of enrolment. Where circumstances beyond the control of parent's result in an acceptance of enrolment not being fulfilled the Principal will give consideration to a refund of the Acceptance of Enrolment fee.
4. Upon enrolment, a schedule of all fees and costs for the education of their child at Whitford Catholic Primary School will be provided to the parents.
5. Fees and charges for the following year will be announced at the AGM of the Whitford Catholic Primary School Board held in November each year. A new fee schedule will be distributed to parents following the AGM each year.
6. Fee discounts are offered in accordance with Catholic Education Office recommendations:
 - First child - 0% discount
 - Second child - 20 % discount
 - Third child - 40% discount
 - Fourth child and beyond - 100% discount
7. Kindergarten fees shall be charged as a proportion of the respective first child full time fee. Sibling discounts apply to kindergarten students.
8. All students and families are eligible for sibling discounts including families who receive automatic tuition fee discounts as holders of eligible means tested family concession cards.
9. Discounts apply to tuition fees only and not to levies and other charges.
10. Within the first four weeks of first term an Annual Fees account will be send to all parents. 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, or pay in instalments throughout the year.
11. Payment options available are BPay, credit card, EFTPOS, cheque, cash or Direct Debit.
12. A Proposed School Fee Payment form will be sent home with fees and must be completed and returned by the due date.
13. Families with Family Health Care Cards or Pensioner Cards can apply for fee assistance by completing an 'HCC Tuition Fee Discount Scheme' form and presenting a valid concession card. No fee assistance can be given without both the form and valid card.
14. The Principal shall ensure that, prior to legal action, all reasonable efforts have been made to contact parents and/or guardians in order to resolve fee payment issues. Documentation shall be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees.

15. Where parents and/or guardians have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee payment strategy and further action is required:
- 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 and/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.
16. Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy, the following action will occur:
- Parents and/or guardians shall be notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor shall be engaged to recover outstanding fees and any additional costs shall be added to the account in accordance with the School Fee Policy.
 - 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. A General Procedure Claim (summons) can be issued by the appropriate school authority via the debt collection agency engaged and judgment entered against the parent. Before enforcement proceedings are taken, such as a Property Seizure and Sale Order, Earnings Appropriation Order, or any other enforcement action, written approval shall be obtained from the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

REFERENCES

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

RELATED DOCUMENTS

ACCC, Trade Practices Act (TPA)

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)

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