



ST MARY STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE SCHOOL FEE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Catholic schools are only partially funded by governments, both State and Federal; therefore, school fees, paid by parents / carers, are essential to help meet the gap between government funding and the cost of providing quality educational outcomes and learning experiences for students.

In determining the amount of school fees to be charged, the financial commitment of our families in sending their children to a Catholic school is foremost in deliberations. It is always our intent to minimise the burden on families and ensure timely communication in relation to school fees.

This policy is intended to provide comprehensive, transparent, and accessible information regarding the management of school fees to all stakeholders of St Mary Star of the Sea College. These stakeholders include families, both current and prospective, the College Principal and College Staff.

The following are key aims relating to the management of school fees:

- To give a practical response to the Church's principles of the common good and a preferential option for the poor.
- To give centrality to the principles of equity, justice, and respect for all families within our college community.
- To provide greater consistency and transparency in relation to the setting and collection of school fees.
- To maintain high standards of ethical and financial practice; and
- To identify and ensure appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality.

SCHOOL FEE MANAGEMENT

Management of school fees involves a number of different activities including **Invoicing, Receipting, and the granting of Fee Concession and Fee Collection.**

INVOICING OF SCHOOL FEES

The following provides an explanation of the different types of school fees invoiced and the purpose for which they are used:

SCHOOL FEE INFORMATION
<p>TUITION FEES</p> <p>Tuition fees are set each year by the College and approved by the Board. This fee is to assist with the provision of operating costs, equipment, resources, payment of salaries and workers' compensation/public liability insurance.</p> <p>Charged per student with Sibling Discounts.</p>
<p>CAPITAL LEVY</p> <p>The Capital Levy is set each year by the College and approved by the Board. The income from the levy contributes to the capital and maintenance costs of the College buildings, infrastructure, construction, and maintenance of facilities. The levy is compulsory and is not tax deductible.</p> <p>Charged per family.</p>

SCHOOL FEE INFORMATION
SCHOOL RESOURCES AND OTHER SCHOOL BASED FEES
<p>School Resources and Other School Based Fees are set each year by the College and approved by the Board. Broadly, the school-based fees are categorised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and Course specific fees. • Fees for Activities e.g., Retreats, camps, excursions, sport, and other additional learning activities (compulsory excursions such as camps, retreats and the like are non-refundable as the excursion has been planned and paid in advance on the basis of full attendance). • Stage 6 Texts and Resources. • Other fees for activities may be charged from time-to-time. <p>Charged per student.</p>
TECHNOLOGY LEVY
<p>The Technology Levy is set each year by the College and approved by the Board. This fee is to support the use of devices and to ensure a high-quality system infrastructure for all students.</p> <p>Charged per student.</p>
P&F LEVY
<p>The P&F Levy is administered by the College on behalf of St Mary Star of the Sea College Parents & Friends Association. All funds collected by the College are forwarded to the Association to support College and student projects and activities.</p> <p>Charged per family.</p>
ENROLMENT APPLICATION FEE
<p>The Application Fee is payable upon lodgement of an application. The fee is non-refundable and non-transferable and is charged to cover the costs of the administration of student admission.</p> <p>Charged per student.</p>
ENROLMENT ACCEPTANCE FEE
<p>The Enrolment Acceptance Fee is payable upon confirmation of acceptance to Year 7. The fee is deducted from school fees at the date of commencement of the school year. If a student's enrolment is cancelled the fee is non-refundable.</p> <p>Charged per student.</p>

COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS /CARERS REGARDING SCHOOL FEE INVOICING

At the point of enrolment and prior to commencing school, it is compulsory that all families complete a School Fee Agreement Form. This form indicates how school fees will be paid, it is critical in enabling the College to manage the collection of school fees in a just and equitable way and at the same time, support families who from time-to-time may encounter financial difficulty.

St Mary Star of the Sea College will issue families with School Fee Information annually which sets out all fees that may be invoiced. An Annual Invoice Statement will be made available via the on-line Parent Portal in Term 1, followed by regular statements to all parties that have submitted the Enrolment Application. Other charges may be added to your account from time-to-time.

CALCULATION OF FEES IN THE CASE OF EARLY WITHDRAWAL OR LATE ENTRY

For students leaving or enrolling throughout the year, a school fee method of calculation invoicing procedure will be applied. This invoicing is based on pro-rata principles where possible, however where students have accessed activities, received resources e.g., books and equipment, parents/carers will need to pay these fees in full. Additionally, the cost of any outstanding resources not returned to the College by the leaving date will be invoiced and payment in full is required.

If a student is withdrawn from the College one full term's notice must be given in writing to the Principal. If one term's notice is not given, a full term's fee will be charged.

FAMILY COMMITMENT

When families decide on a Catholic school for their children, they knowingly take on additional financial responsibilities associated with school fees, which must be honoured in accordance with normal commercial practices.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Principal is required to ensure that all personnel involved in school fee management maintain strict confidentiality and respect for the financial circumstances, dignity, and privacy of families at the College. Generally, these are only accessed by the Principal, Fees Coordinator, Business Manager and Administration Clerk. Steps on the part of the College will also be taken to ensure that students do not have an awareness of their parent /carer's financial situation. For this reason, all **follow-up** letters or correspondence will be mailed to parents.

RECEIPTING OF SCHOOL FEES

School fees are generally due 30 days after invoicing, however, the College offers a variety of methods of payment and sequences to provide families with flexibility to meet their commitments. These include:

METHOD	FREQUENCY
Online, BPay, Direct Debit, Credit Card, Cash, Cheque and EFTPOS facilities	Fortnightly, Monthly, Term

To facilitate this flexibility parents /carers must complete a School Fee Agreement at time of enrolment to advise the College of their intended payment option. These forms will also be available at the College upon request. A 'School Fee Calculator' is provided on the website to assist families to determine their regular payment. Please note that fees are expected to be paid in full by the end of November of each year.

SIBLING DISCOUNTS

The College provides a reduction in tuition fees if parents enrol a child at St Mary Star of the Sea College or Edmund Rice College. Discounts are currently as follows:

TUITION FEE COMPONENT – Child enrolled in either school	
Child One	No Discount
Child Two	20% Discount
Child Three and More	25% Discount

JOINT AND SEVERAL LIABILITY

When parents /carers enrol their children in St Mary Star of the Sea College they enter into an obligation to pay all school fees and levies. They execute this by signing the Enrolment Application. In other words, the parties that have signed the Enrolment Application form have committed to payment and responsibility for fees in a **joint and several arrangement**.

Put simply, **joint and several liability** means that each party to the enrolment application, (i.e., each person who has signed the enrolment application), is **individually** responsible for payment of **all** school fees and levies regardless of actual fee payer arrangements (meaning personal arrangements made between parents/carers to pay school fees).

It should be noted that Child Support Agreements and Family Law Court Orders are agreements between parents /carers and do not impose obligations on St Mary Star of the Sea College in relation to invoicing nor the payment of school fees to a particular parent/carer. Despite Family Law Court Orders or Child Support Agreements, any parent/carers who signs the Enrolment Application are jointly and severally liable, therefore St Mary Star of the Sea College will not act on requests in respect of such Court documents in relation to the negation or allocation of school fees.

Please note that St Mary Star of the Sea College does not provide separate split invoices of fee accounts. It is an expectation that all parties to the Enrolment Application (form) organise their own fee payment arrangements.

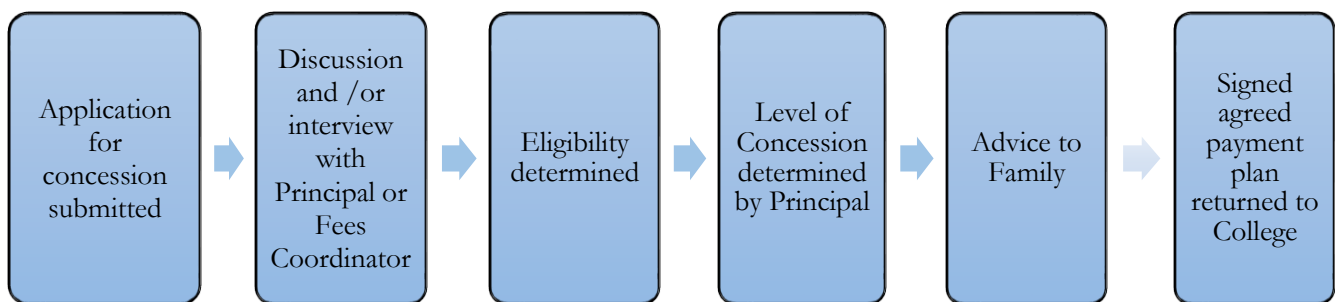
FEE CONCESSION – FAMILIES IN GENUINE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

In keeping with Catholic social teaching, and the Gospel imperative of a ‘preferential option for the poor’, the practice at St Mary Star of the Sea College has always been to reasonably support families encountering financial hardship. In these circumstances, the College expects that families seek such support and subsequently engage in such agreements in good faith. This means:

- i. families acknowledge the importance of school fees as a means to providing opportunity, facilities and resources for **all** students.
- ii. families will **respond** to communication from the College that seeks to determine:
 - their need for financial support.
 - the extent of financial support; and
 - the capacity of families to make some agreed contribution towards school fees.
- iii. families are open, honest, and transparent in their communication.
- iv. families are faithful to agreed payment plans of support.

For the purpose of determining eligibility for fee concession under these circumstances, the definition of genuine financial hardship has been determined as:

*A situation where a family is unable because of illness, unemployment, or other reasonable cause, to discharge their financial obligations to pay school fees, rather than an unwillingness to do so.
Financial hardship can be of limited or long-term duration.*

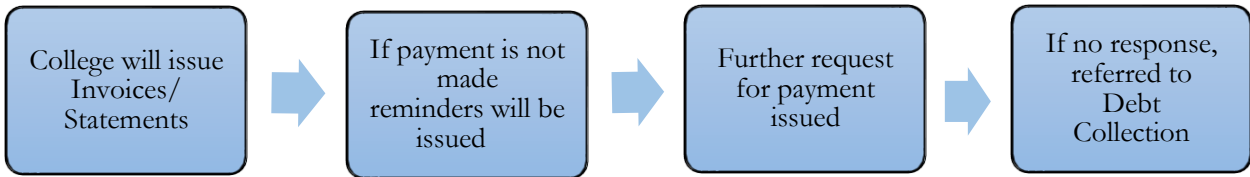


If a family indicates that they will have difficulty with payment at the time of enrolment or at any time during their children’s enrolment, the College may assist families in financial need with the completion of a Bursary Application. These are available from the College. The Bursary is means tested and the applicant’s family/carer’s will be required to provide documentary evidence of their financial circumstances which would otherwise prevent you from sending your daughter to the College or maintain her enrolment. Any bursary awarded is for a fixed period and will only cover a portion of the annual tuition fee component.

Any bursary awarded will also be subject to regular review which may require a new application to be submitted. An interview may also be required as part of the process. On submission of an application, with the required documentation, a formal review will be undertaken by the Principal and the College will seek to inform you of the outcome in writing as soon as practicable.

COLLECTION OF UNPAID SCHOOL FEES

Collection is the action of collecting unpaid monies. It takes place to secure payment from families who are legally bound to pay school fees. **If families have the capacity to meet their commitments and fail to do so, debt collection processes will result. This escalation may result in the account being referred to a Solicitor or Debt Collection Agency.**



RELATED POLICES AND GUIDELINES

- Enrolment Application
 - Application for Fee Concession
 - School Fee Payment Agreement
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