



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

RATIONALE

The collection and setting of school fees for St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is in keeping with CECWA policy and is seen by the Bishops of Western Australia as a necessary contribution by parents towards the costs of delivering a Catholic Education for their children. As a Catholic school, operating as part of the Catholic Church, we have a vital mission, to provide a Catholic education for the children of all families in our Parish. As such there is an obligation on us, as a school community, to ensure that all families who desire their children to be educated in their faith, can do so without fear of prejudice on the grounds of financial concerns.

There is also a recognition that State and Commonwealth funding, although significant, does not provide all of the money necessary to maintain the operation of the school. We are very much dependent upon the financial contributions of the families within the school to maintain the best possible level of educational service that we provide. There is therefore, an obligation on the part of families with children at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School to contribute to the cost of running the school. This obligation, which shall be termed “school fees” for the purposes of this policy, incorporates tuition fees, amenities fees, various levies and other charges. These are set annually and announced to parents by the School Board at the Annual Community Meeting and distributed to parents prior to the start of the school year.

The School Board’s deliberations on the setting of fees and charges is based on the necessity to support the school Principal in framing a budget for the following year. An important factor in these budget and fee deliberations is the expected enrolments for the following year. Staffing levels and contracts are based on enrolment numbers and this is then factored into budget calculations. Families that leave during the course of the year do have an impact on the school’s budget and finances and this needs to be taken into account in framing the Principles below.

School fees may be paid annually, over the 1 billing period, by direct debit or by individual payment schedules. All accounts are to be paid in full before the close of school in the current calendar year. 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.

Recipients of Social Welfare benefits are entitled to claim a concession only on tuition fees as determined on a needs basis. An appointment with the School Finance Officer or Principal is required in each year a concession is requested. Parents experiencing financial difficulty are asked and encouraged to discuss their position with the Principal in order to negotiate a repayment schedule. Confidentiality is assured in relation to the payment of school fees and the setting of any concession or repayment schedule. This is restricted to the Principal and Administrative (office) staff.

Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy – the school’s “Non-Payment of Fees Collection Procedures” will be implemented.

DEFINITIONS

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. Application for Enrolment Fee: the fee associated with processing an application for student enrolment into a school

PRINCIPLES

1. The inability to pay school fees will not be a factor in determining the acceptance or enrolment of a family into the school or exclusion of a student currently enrolled at the school.
2. The inability to pay school fees will never be a reason for the withdrawal or withholding of services to the student.
3. Families with limited capacity to pay school fees are provided with the entitlement to claim a school fee concession, usually through the Health Care Card discount scheme.
4. In the practice of Christian charity all applications for fee concessions will be treated with dignity, compassion and confidentiality. Pastoral Care for school families is paramount in all decision making.
5. Families deciding to leave the school during the course of the school year must give one term's written notification to the office. In situations where a family leaves the school at the end of a term or part way through a term without the due notification, the school retains the right to charge the fees payable for the following term. Where a family leaves the school at the commencement or early in a school term without the due notification, the school retains the right to charge the fees payable for that term.
6. All information pertaining to parents and the collection of school fees will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
7. In a spirit of Christian charity and justice the School Board will actively pursue the collection of school fees.
8. Any changes to the School Fee Policy will be communicated to parents and the school community at least four weeks prior to the proposed implementation date.

PROCEDURES

1. School fees will be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year at the Annual Community Meeting.
2. The Principal may, from time to time, request financial information from families to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
3. Families that are holders of an eligible means-tested concession card are simply required to provide evidence that their card is valid for the duration of the academic year.
4. Families with siblings enrolled at St Thomas More are entitled to a Family discount:
2nd child enrolled receives a 20% discount on tuition fees
3rd child enrolled receives a 40% discount on tuition fees
4th child and beyond receive 100% discount on tuition fees
5. School Fees and charges are calculated over 1 period billing cycle each year.

PROCEDURES FOR PAYMENT OF FEES

1. School Fee Statement Accounts are distributed from Week 3 of Term 1 with 21 days to settle payment arrangements for the account.
2. Reminder School Fee Statements are sent to parents during Week 8 of Term 3, requesting settlement of the account.
3. An Outstanding Account (Fee Collection Letter 1) will be posted by the Finance Officer requesting settlement of account within 14 days or the scheduling of a meeting with the Principal to negotiate a payment schedule if fees are still remaining by 30th November.
4. The preferred method for payment is through Direct Debit, however, fees may also be paid by cheque, cash, Credit Card, EFTPOS and B Pay.
5. A Direct Debit payment can be scheduled on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.
6. All fees must be paid in full by 30th November each year.

NON-PAYMENT OF FEES COLLECTION PROCEDURES:

1. If no action or resolution is achieved as a result of Procedure #3, then the Non-Payment of Fees Collection Procedures will be implemented.
2. If there has been no attempt to contact the Principal or make payment of fees, following the distribution of Fee Collection Letter 1, then Fee Collection Letter 2 will be issued. This warning letter will notify the parents of the intention to take further action and offer a further 14 days to make payment or to contact the Principal to discuss a Variation of School Fees Schedule.
3. If after the further 14 days there has been no attempt to contact the Principal or make payment of school fees, then the final letter – Fee Collection Letter 3 will be issued. This warning letter will notify the parent of the intention to refer the matter to a debt collection agency, if the parent fails to make contact with the school and arrangements for either payment of the account or an interview to discuss a Variation of School Fees Schedule.
4. If the parent has failed to contact the school within 14 days from the date of the third warning letter, then the Principal will refer the matter to a debt collection agency seeking recovery of fees outstanding along with recovery costs.
5. In the event that the debt collection agent is unsuccessful in contacting the parents or in establishing a debt repayment plan, the school may choose to undertake court proceedings or other enforcement actions.