



St Peter's Primary School
103 Wood Street, Inglewood

Policy: **ST PETER'S SCHOOL FEES:
SETTING AND COLLECTION**

Policy Area: Stewardship
Date Reviewed: 2016
Review Date:

This policy has been developed with reference to the
Catholic Education Policy Number 2C-12 School Fees: Setting and Collection

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 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.

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 (eg, 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

Role of School Board - St Peter's is a diocesan accountable 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 CEWA.

PRINCIPLES

1. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
2. Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from a Catholic school.
3. Schools shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.
4. 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.
5. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.

6. The withholding of access to students of normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
7. Every effort shall be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees.
8. Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

PROCEDURES

1. School fees and charges are to be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year. Fees, as well as all applicable standard discounts, shall be clearly advertised. Information shall be easily accessible to parents, including through fee brochures, school websites and newsletters.
2. St Peter’s complies with a standard schedule of fees to ensure consistency and comparability across all schools in the system.
3. At St Peter’s, there:
 - is a recognition of the Church’s preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged;
 - is communication of the policy to parents;
 - are details of school fees as well as information relating to discounts and fee concessions;
 - is a timeline for the payment of accounts;
 - is a process of negotiating the method of payment and the provision of concessions if required;
 - is information regarding access to the various forms of government assistance;
 - are procedures following non-payment, up to and including Judgment.
4. The Principal may, from time to time, request financial information from families to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
5. On application for admission, parents and/or guardians will be provided with the school’s fee policy.
6. Acknowledgement of the fee collection procedures shall be on the “Confirmation of 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.

Fees prior to enrolment

7. An application fee is charged for the processing of enrolment fees and are non-refundable.
8. Confirmation of enrolment fee is charged on acceptance of a place.

Fee Setting

9. Annual school fees are set by the School Board during the budget process each year. Increases to total school fees are in accordance with the maximum increase parameters annually set by the CEWA.
10. Kindergarten fees are charged as a proportion of the school’s Year 1 School Fees.
11. Total school fee contributions for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards is an automatic entitlement. Total school fees for holders of valid cards will be approved by the CEWA as part of the annual budget allocation process and shall be communicated to schools by the Catholic Education Office during the budget process each year.
12. Siblings enrolled in Kindergarten through to Year 6 at St Peter’s shall receive a discount – the level of discount shall be as follows:

1 st child enrolled	0%
2 nd child enrolled	20% of that child’s tuition fee

3 rd child enrolled	40% of that child's tuition fee
4 th child enrolled and beyond	100% of that child's tuition fee

13. 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.

Fee Collection

14. St Peter's has strategies for fee collection that are consistent with the principles of this policy:

- Fees and their payment is discussed with parents at the time of enrolment. Relevant information on school fees and the specific school policy is made available at that time.
- St Peter's facilitates multiple ways and frequencies for parents to pay, eg, debit card, credit card, direct debit or bank transfer, and weekly, monthly, per term or yearly.
- Fees for the following year are communicated in advance of the year-end.
- A full statement of fees payable for the year is provided to each parent at the start of the school year and periodic statements (eg, per term) follow.

15. Every effort is 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, is approached humanely and sensitively to protect the child as much as possible from the public embarrassment that could arise.

16. The steps 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 registered letter from the School Principal will be used to remind parents of their financial obligations. This letter includes 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 registered letter with a final notice, seeking payment and outlining the specific 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 an approved 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, St Peter's may consider initiating court proceedings. Before this is done, St Peter's will inform the Executive Director of Catholic Education in writing.
- Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, such as Property Seizure and Sale Order, Earnings Appropriation Order or any other enforcement action, St Peter's will obtain written approval from the Executive Director of Catholic Education.
- Under no circumstances will a child enrolled at St Peter's be refused ongoing enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.