



School Fees: Setting & Collection

Policy Area: Stewardship

Date for Review: 2019

1. RATIONALE

St Helena's Catholic Primary School (St Helena's) seeks to make a Catholic education available to all Catholic students whose parents and/or guardians seek a Catholic education for them, insofar as this is possible, while embodying the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Bishops' Mandate p 50).

St Helena's has a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which it operates to parents and/or guardians enrolling their children in Catholic schools. The school is obliged to minimise potential barriers for parents and/or guardians and to keep costs as low as possible (Bishops' Mandate p 22).

Parents and/or guardians 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.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **School Fees:**
For the purpose of this policy '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).
- **Application for Enrolment Fee:**
The fee associated with processing an application for student enrolment into a school.
- **Acceptance of Enrolment Fee:**
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.
- **Role of the School Board:**
The St Helena's School 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 Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA).

3. PRINCIPLES

1. School fees shall 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 Helena's.
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.

3. PRINCIPLES (CONT'D)

6. Families with current eligible means tested family concession cards (Health Care Cards or Pensioner Concession Card) have an automatic entitlement to school 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.

4. PROCEDURES

1. School fees shall be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year.
2. On application for admission, parents and/or guardians shall be provided with the school's fee policy and schedule. This shall include details of the school's fee concession practices. Any clarification needed by the parents and/or guardians about the school's fee policy shall be given at the initial enrolment interview.
3. Acknowledgement of the fee collection procedures shall be on the 'Application for Enrolment' form which shall be signed by both parents and/or guardians. In the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian, one signature shall suffice

Fees Prior to Enrolment

4. Application for Enrolment fees shall be \$55.00 and shall be paid at the time of lodging an application. This fee shall be non-refundable.
5. Enrolment deposits shall be no more than 25% of the annual tuition fee and shall be deducted from the first semester's tuition fees in the year of enrolment. Where circumstances beyond the control of the parents and/or guardians result in an enrolment deposit not being paid, the principal shall consider waiving the deposit

Fee Setting

6. 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.
7. Kindergarten fees shall be charged as a proportion of the respective Year 1 fee.

Fee Discounts

8. The CECWA decision regarding automatic tuition fee discounts for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards shall be implemented across all year levels, from Kindergarten to Year 6. Family Building Levies shall be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee, i.e. 30%. Families shall provide evidence that their card is valid for the duration of the academic year.
9. Certain specific additional charges for holders of eligible means-tested family concession cards may be added. These may include charges associated with camps, music lessons and other activities where there are direct and additional associated costs.
10. Families seeking fee concessions shall discuss this with the principal and negotiate a mutually acceptable method of payment. Fee concessions may be the whole or part discounting of school fees, including tuition and levies, and can be applied at any time during the school year. The principal may, from time to time, request financial information from families to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
11. All fee concessions shall be approved by the Principal and documented appropriately.

4. PROCEDURES (CONT'D)

Discounts for Families

12. Families with siblings enrolled at St Helena's in Kindergarten through to Year 6 are entitled to a level of family discount determined by the School Board. The level of family discounts at St Helena's shall be:
 - 2nd child 20% of that child's tuition fees
 - 3rd child 40% of that child's tuition fees
 - 4th child & beyond 100% of that/each child's tuition fees
13. 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.
14. The usual family discounts shall be offered for Special Education students whether siblings attend St Helena's or another Catholic school.

Fee Collection

15. The School Fee Statement detailing the full charges for the year shall be issued at the commencement of the school year. Accounts can be paid over three terms or in full upon receipt of the statement (or by other arrangement as negotiated with the principal). All payments shall be made by the due date indicated on the year's statement.
16. Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.
17. Where parents and/or guardians have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee payment strategy and further action shall be undertaken:
 - A written communication shall be sent to the parents and/or guardians, bringing promptly to their attention the outstanding balance.
 - Should there be no response within 14 days, the principal or their delegate shall approach the parents and/or guardians on a personal basis.
 - If the personal approach cannot be made, or no action results from within another 14 days, a formal registered letter from the principal shall be issued to remind parents and/or guardians of their financial obligations.
 - Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter, the principal shall send a formal registered 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 and/or guardians or in establishing a debt repayment plan, the school may initiate court proceedings.

Revised 2017
Due for Review 2019

REFERENCES

¹ *Bishops of Western Australia 2009, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015*