

ST. BRIGID'S SCHOOL COLLIE

SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

Reviewed: 2004
Reviewed: 2006
Reviewed: 2009
Reviewed: 2014
Reviewed: 2015
Reviewed 2017
Next Review: 2019



RATIONALE:

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 Brigid's to contribute to the cost of running the school. This obligation, which shall be termed "School Fees" for the purposes of this policy includes the total cost of educating a child and comprises tuition fees, amenities fees, various levies and any other charges (including for example camp fees, music lessons). 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.

PRINCIPLES:

To ensure that there is equity and justice in all financial matters relating to School Fee collection, the following principles will apply.

1. The inability to pay School Fees will not be a factor in determining the acceptance or enrolment or re-enrolment of a family into the school.
2. The inability to pay School Fees will never be a reason for the exclusion of a student from the school.
3. The inability to pay or non-payment of School Fees will never be a reason for the withdrawal or withholding of services and activities to the student.
4. The School Board have a role in the setting and collection of School Fees in accordance with the guidelines of CECWA. The setting of school fees by the School Board is part of the budget process each year. Increases to School Fees shall be in accordance with CECWA parameters and guidelines.
5. School Fees should reflect the socio-economic status of the school community. Charges on a user pay basis (e.g. Amenities and other charges such as camp fees) should be kept to a

minimum to assist those families who encounter difficulties in meeting these additional charges.

6. In a spirit of Christian charity and justice the Principal will actively pursue the collection of School Fees by those families with the capacity to pay.
7. Families with limited capacity to pay School Fees have an entitlement to claim a School Fee concession. In the practice of Christian charity all applications for School Fee concessions will be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality. All information pertaining to parents and the collection of School Fees will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and shall be maintained as mandated by legislation.
8. On application for admission parents must be provided with a copy of this policy. A parent acknowledgment of the School Fees collection procedure must form part of the Application for Enrolment Form.
9. School Fees and all discounts (including CECWA's Health Care Card Discount Scheme) shall be clearly advertised and easily accessible to parents, including on the school website and (if relevant) in the format prescribed by CECWA.
10. Any changes to this School Fees: Setting and Collection Policy will be communicated to parents and the school community at least four weeks prior to the proposed implementation date.

Procedures for Payment of School Fees other than by Direct Debit:

11. School Fees are to be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year. These shall be published prominently and unambiguously in newsletters and on the school website.
12. A statement of Amenities payable per child (including consumables, text books, equipment, insurance, incursions/excursions and swimming lessons) for a particular school year shall be issued to each parent before the end of the preceding school year.
13. Amenities are payable on or before the date the relevant school year commences.
14. A School Fee account will be sent out during week 2 of Term 1 detailing all known amounts that are payable for the whole school year. This will include tuition fees for semester 1 and semester 2, building levy for semester 1 and semester 2, P&F levy, outstanding amenities and any other amounts that are known at that point in time (such as year books, camps, graduation shirts).
15. Parents have the option of paying the entire account by week 5 of Term 1. The principal has a discretion as to whether to offer an inducement (such as entry into a raffle) to those families that pay the full year account by the due date.
16. Alternatively, parents can elect to defer the payment of the tuition fees, levies and any other specific amounts relating to semester 2 until week 5 of Term 3. All other items included in the account will be payable by week 5 of Term 1.
17. School Fee accounts will also be sent out during week 1 of Terms 2, 3 and 4 to parents that have amounts payable at that point in time. These will include amounts owing by parents that elected to defer payment of amounts relating to semester 2. These accounts may also include extra charges that were not known when the initial account was issued in Term 1.
18. School Fee accounts issued in Terms 2, 3 and 4 are to be paid by week 5 of the term in which

they are issued. For the avoidance of doubt any deferred amounts relating to Semester 2 appearing in the account issued in Term 2 may continue to be deferred until Term 3.

19. School Fees may be paid by cash, cheque, EFTPOS or credit card at the school office during normal office hours, posted or sent in an envelope to school with a child. Bpay is also available to settle family accounts via code on statements.
20. If payment has not been received by the commencement of week 6 then a reminder account will be issued to bring the outstanding balance to the attention of the parent(s). The parent has 14 days in which to either pay the account or make contact with the Principal to discuss the account.
21. Should there be no response within 14 days, the Principal shall approach the parent(s) personally in a sensitive, discreet and confidential manner.
22. If the personal approach cannot be made or no action results from it within another 14 days, then a formal letter will be issued under registered mail by the Principal. This letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the school and a specified timeframe for a response.
23. Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter, the Principal should send another formal, registered letter with a final notice, seeking payment and outlining possible outcomes, including legal action, which could occur if the parent fails to contact the school and make arrangements for either payment of the account or for an interview to discuss the matter within 14 days of the date of this second letter.
24. If after 14 days following the second letter the parent has failed to pay the account or contact the school, then the Principal may seek approval from the School Board to engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover the outstanding fees and any additional costs.
25. In the event that a debt collection agent is not successful in contacting the parent and/or establishing a debt repayment plan, the school may consider initiating court proceedings. Before this is done, the school must inform in writing the Executive Director of Catholic Education. Furthermore, before any legal enforcement proceedings or actions are taken the school shall obtain written approval from the Executive Director of Catholic Education.
26. It is noted that if the parent meets with the Principal to discuss the matter then a resolution may involve payment of the account or a signed Variation of School Fees Schedule.
27. Comprehensive documentation shall be kept for each debt recovery matter including each step taken to resolve the matter.

Procedures for Payment of School Fees by Direct Debit:

28. As an alternative to the above payment procedures a parent may elect to pay School Fees by entering into a "Direct Debit" arrangement with the school. Under such arrangement it is agreed that estimated School Fees for a year may be paid over time by authorised regular deductions from a nominated bank account. Deductions can be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.
29. If a parent wishes to opt in to a Direct Debit payment arrangement for a particular school year, then a direct debit form must be completed at the school office before the end of the preceding school year.
30. Parents with their first child entering Kindy will, however, be able to complete such a form

before the end of Week 4 of Term 1 for the particular school year.

31. The amount of the deduction will be calculated by the School and will reflect all estimable School Fees for the particular school year. The amount of the deduction calculated will also reflect that those School Fees are required to be paid in full by the end of Week 4 of Term 4.
32. If the Amenities amount is known at the time of calculating the required deduction, then they can be included in the direct debit calculation provided that the arrangement is entered into before the end of the preceding school year. In all other circumstances Amenities will be payable in accordance with paragraphs 13 and 14 of this policy.
33. The direct debit payments will commence from the time the form is completed.
34. School Fee accounts will be sent out during week 2 of Term 1 and during week 1 of Terms 2, 3 and 4.
35. Any outstanding School Fees for the year that have not been recovered under the Direct Debit or other payment arrangements must be separately paid by week 5 of Term 4. Any such additional payments that are due may be paid by cash, cheque, EFTPOS or credit card at the school office during normal office hours, posted or sent in an envelope to school with a child. Bpay is another option for payment.
36. If at the end of Week 4 of Term 4, an account is in a credit position (ie the family has overpaid amounts due under the direct debit arrangement) then the credit can be carried forward and applied against amounts due for the next year. If the family will not have any students enrolled in the next year then the credit will be refunded.
37. If payment of any outstanding amount has not been received by the commencement of week 6 of Term Four, then a reminder account will be issued to bring the outstanding balance to the attention of the parent(s). The parent has 14 days in which to either pay the account or make contact with the Principal to discuss the account.
38. Should there be no response within 14 days then fee collection process as set out above in paragraphs 22 to 28 of this policy will apply.
39. School Excursions, Camp Fees and any other costs that occur during a year that are not able to be estimated at the time any Direct Debit arrangement is entered into are not able to be paid for by Direct Debit. For these types of costs, the "Procedures for Payment of School Fees other than by Direct Debit " as outlined above would apply.

Concessions, Discounts and Variation of School Fees:

40. Any parent seeking relief or a concession in relation to the payment of School Fees is encouraged to contact the Principal to discuss the matter.
41. Families that are holders of an eligible means-tested family concession card (Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card) are entitled to an automatic school fee concession. Such families are simply required to provide evidence that their card is valid for the duration of the academic year to obtain the school fee concession. The card is required to be presented to the school each year. The amount of this school fee concession is set by CECWA, and ordinarily applies to tuition fees and the building levy.
42. Alternatively, by arrangement with the Principal, School Fees may be reduced and/or

alternative payment arrangements may be agreed (for example to be paid in instalments on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis over an agreed time period). Such arrangement would include the completion and signing a Variation of School Fees Schedule as attached to this policy. The Principal may from time to time request financial information from families to support their application for and ongoing need for the school fee variation.

43. Families with siblings enrolled in the school are entitled to a family discount as determined by the School Board. Families receiving automatic tuition fee discounts are also eligible for family discounts.
44. Kindergarten fees shall be charge as a proportion of the Year 1 fee based on the number of days that the Kindergarten program runs.

Further Notes:

45. Any reference to "parent" in this policy means any parent(s) or guardian(s) as the case may be.
46. School uniform and stationary costs are not considered to form part of School Fees and must be separately paid for at the Office on purchase/ordering of items.
47. The Principal may at his/her discretion defer steps leading to the involvement of a debt collection agency in situations where ongoing dialogue with the parent is occurring and is thought to be a more appropriate means to resolve the matter. In a situation where all avenues of communication and negotiation with the parent have been exhausted and the matter still remains unresolved, the Principal shall do a cost/benefit analysis before asking the School Board to approve the engagement of a debt collection agency or solicitor. Taking into account the conclusions drawn from such an analysis; the Principal has the discretion to determine whether to ultimately seek approval from the Board in engaging a debt collection agency or solicitor.
48. If a family leave the school part way through a year, then tuition fees are payable for every week or part thereof that the child(ren) remained enrolled in the school. The amount payable is calculated as a proportion of school weeks (or part thereof) enrolled over the total number of school weeks (or part thereof) in the relevant semester. School holiday weeks are not taken into account. If a leaving family has paid a full semester tuition fee, in relation to a semester where enrolment ceases part way through the semester, they will be refunded the amount of any overpayment of tuition fees.
49. If a request is made for a student to have an extended absence, then in situations where that absence exceeds a full semester (or 20 school weeks in total) then the family will not be required to pay, or will be credited as the case may be, an amount equivalent to the tuition fees referable to one
50. The School may decide to collect an Enrolment Deposit (i.e. School fees paid in advance as a deposit to secure enrolment). If an Enrolment Deposit is collected it shall be no more than 25% of the annual school tuition fee and it shall be deducted from the first semester's tuition fees.
51. If the School decides to charge a non-refundable Application Fee (i.e. a charge for processing an enrolment application), then this fee cannot exceed the greater of \$55 and 1% of the annual tuition fee.



Variation of School Fees Schedule

Please complete all sections as fully as possible. This information is confidential to the Principal, School Board Treasurer and School Bursar. In circumstances where there is a total breakdown of communication between school and parents and the issue of debt repayments remains unresolved, details may be released to CEWA, the school's external debt collector(s) and legal representatives.

1. **Name:** _____

2. **Phone number:** _____ (mobile) _____ (work)

3. **Marital Status (please circle):**

Married Widow /Widower Divorced Separated

4. **My children live with:**

Father & Mother Father Mother Guardian Split

5. **Employment:**

Father: Full Time Part Time Self Employed Unemployed

Present Occupation (if applicable): _____

If unemployed:

- What was your previous occupation? _____
- When were you last employed? _____
- For how long? _____

Mother: Full Time Part Time Self Employed Unemployed

Present Occupation (if applicable): _____

If unemployed:

- What was your previous occupation? _____
- When were you last employed? _____
- For how long? _____

6.

Children attending school *or* educational institutions

CHILD'S NAME	NAME OF SCHOOL	YEAR	FEE PER

Have you been granted a reduction in fees for your children attending any of the above schools

educational institutions this year? If so, please provide details of the arrangements that have been made.

7.

7. Please detail your reasons for seeking this variation in school fees.

Monthly Income and Expenditure Statement

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Business income - drawings	\$ _____	House payments/rent	\$ _____
Salary (net)		Car(s) repayments	\$ _____
self	\$ _____	Loan repayments	\$ _____
spouse	\$ _____	Rates	
Investments & income e.g.		ElectricityGas	\$ _____
shares, property etc.	\$ _____	Food	\$ _____
Family allowance	\$ _____	Education	\$ _____
Maintenance	\$ _____	Fuel / Car	\$ _____
Supporting parents	\$ _____	expensesMedical	\$ _____
Unemployment benefit	\$ _____	Personal Phone	_____
Sickness benefit	\$ _____	Entertainment	\$ _____
Pension	\$ _____	/sport.	\$ _____
Austudy	\$ _____	Miscellaneous	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____	Other repayments	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____	Other repayments Other L	\$ _____
TOTAL INCOME	\$ _____	EXPENDITURE	\$ _____
			\$ _____

Parent Declaration

Mindful of the responsibility shared by all parents of St.Brigid's School, Collie, I consider that I am able to make a weekly/fortnightly/monthly payment of \$_____

- I understand that payments will be due on or before the dates highlighted on the calendar that forms part of this schedule.
- I understand that if I do not keep to this agreement and fail to contact the Principal, in the event of failure to keep the agreement, the non-payment of fees clauses of the School Fees: Setting and Collection Policy will be invoked.
- I will advise the school immediately my financial position improves.

I accept the above and declare that the information I have provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The Principal, on behalf of the School Board, has agreed to accept the weekly/fortnightly/monthly payment of \$_____ from _____ for the duration of this y

Signature of Principal: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____