Our Lady of Mount Carmel School

SCHOOL FEE SETTING & COLLECTION POLICY

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 special preference for the poor and disadvantaged. Schools have a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which they operate to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools. Parents are asked 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.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy School Fees includes the total cost of educating a child and comprises of tuition fees levies and other charges (eg excursions, camp fees, amenities, swimming lessons).

ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

As a Diocesan accountable schools, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School Board has a managerial role with regard to the setting and collecting of school fees. In Order accountable schools, Boards may only have an advisory role with regard to school fees.

PRINCIPLES

1. Schools shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community, in the context of policy rationale.
2. Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from a Catholic school.
3. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
4. The withholding of access to students of 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 tuition fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality.
6. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards (Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card) have an automatic entitlement to tuition 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.

FEE SETTING

Annual school fees are set by the School Board during the budget process each year. Increases in total school fees are made in accordance with the maximum increase parameters set by the CECWA.

School fees are announced to the school community at the Annual General Meeting held in November each year. The schedule of fees is subsequently published on the school's website.

FEE DISCOUNTS

Sibling Discount

Family discounts are available according to the following schedule:

- Second child: 20% off the second child's tuition fee.
- Third child: 40% off the third child's tuition fee.
- Additional children: Fourth + child, tuition is free.

There is no sibling discount for students enrolled in 3 Year Old Kindy.

Concession Discount

The Health Care Card Concession Scheme provides an automatic fee concession for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards (Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card). Application forms are available from the school office.

FEES AND PAYMENTS

1. School fee accounts are generated annually in the first half of Term 1, at which time parents are asked to commit to their chosen payment arrangement.
2. Payment arrangements include upfront payment or payment by instalments over 3 terms, monthly, fortnightly or weekly.
3. Fees for the school year are required to be settled in full by 31 October.
4. Fees may be paid in cash, cheque, EFTPOS or Direct Debit.
5. Direct debit payments come from your nominated bank account on an agreed basis, either weekly, fortnightly or monthly. This option is available at no extra cost however any charges incurred as a result of a rejected direct debit will be added to the fee account.
6. A phone call to parents will be made if the payment of fees is not made in accordance with their chosen payment plan.
7. In some circumstances, during the year, parents may make an alteration to their payment plan in consultation with the Finance Officer or the Principal.
8. A follow up letter will be sent if no attempt by the parents has been made to pay fees or an appointment will be made to meet with the Principal.
9. The Principal will be notified of non-payments and a decision will be made by the Principal to present the Fee Account to the Finance Committee of the School Board.

10. The School Board will decide if the school will engage the services of a debt collection agency to recover the fees where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy and further action is required.
11. Documentation will be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees.
12. Parents will be notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor will be engaged to recover outstanding fees. All charges incurred by the school in an attempt to recover fees will be passed on to the parents whose fees are being recovered.
13. A summons can be issued by the appropriate school authority and judgement entered against the parent; however, before enforcement proceedings are taken, such as a Warrant Of Execution, Order of Commitment, Garnishee Order, Judgement Summons etc., approval must be obtained from the Executive Director of Catholic Education.
14. When Our Lady of Mt Carmel School office is notified parents have split/separated, the child's fee account and contact/emergency details will be updated to reflect the situation. Responsibility for the Fee Account will be split evenly between the people who have signed the Confirmation of Enrolment Form, unless otherwise advised in writing by both parents.

REFERENCES

1. CECWA – School Fees: Setting and Collect Policy