



## St Mary MacKillop College

CHOOSE LIFE WITH COURAGE

# SCHOOL FEES SETTING & COLLECTION POLICY

## Rationale

St Mary MacKillop College is committed to the provision of high quality Catholic education in line with the Mandate from the Catholic Education Commission of WA (CECWA). A Catholic Education will be made available to all Catholic students whose parents seek a Catholic Education for them, at the lowest possible cost to families. The College recognises that the socio-economic background of many families at the school requires special consideration. This financial consideration will be given to those families in genuine need.

However, families need also to recognise that there are considerable financial restraints in operating a Catholic College. In their desire to have a quality Catholic education for their children, parents will need to make a commitment to the College through the payment of the fees.

It is to be noted that the Bishops of Western Australia have approved the collection of school fees from parents as necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

## Principles

1. St Mary MacKillop College Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the College, and the Business Manager is responsible for the collection of school fees.
2. The setting of school fees will be in line with the annual directive from the CECWA, while taking into consideration the socio-economic standing of the College community. The principles of Christian charity and justice will underpin the collection of school fees.
3. Inability to pay school fees shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any student from St Mary MacKillop College. The withholding of access to curriculum provision and/or pastoral care shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
4. Sibling discounts on subsequent children enrolled at St Mary MacKillop College will be applied on tuition fees. Families with students in two or more Catholic schools will receive an automatic \$50.00 rebate applied to their account in Term 4 for each year this is applicable.
5. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions (other fees and charges will apply). The amount of the concession will be set by the CECWA each year and notified to schools. Families are required to make an application for this assistance each year, wherever possible adhering to closing dates for each discount scheme on offer.
6. Families with a limited capacity to pay school fees have an entitlement to claim a further fee concession/remission. Requests for fee remissions shall be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality. Applications must be made in writing, addressed to the Principal and must be made each year the family attends the College. Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents/guardians and the payment of school fees.  
  
The Principal may from time to time request financial information from families to support applications for fee remissions or any other concessions.
7. Where parents/guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of these fees shall be actively pursued. The services of a Collection Agency, even though a last resort, will be employed where necessary.

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### Procedures

1. The 'Fees and Charges Policy' will be made available to all current families at the beginning of each school year, along with the Annual Family Statement. At this time information regarding discount schemes for eligible families will also be disseminated.  
  
The Fees and Charges Policy will also be included in the Prospectus for potential families enquiring about enrolment and on the College website. Upon successful application for enrolment, acknowledgement of the fee setting principles and fee collection procedures shall be signed off by all parties involved with the enrolment of the student in the 'Agreement for Enrolment'.
2. The 'Fees and Charges Policy' (updated annually) outlines the following in detail:
  - individual items charged on the annual family statement
  - payment terms available and timeline for payments
  - payment methods available
  - discount schemes available
  - options for assistance with fee payments
  - notice of withdrawal of students
3. Accounts will be mailed to parents at least 4 times a year (initially 1 week prior to the start of the school year and a week before the due date for the 3 instalments). Reminder statements will be either mailed or emailed to families where payments have not been made by the due date. This will be followed up with phone calls and written correspondence where necessary. If accounts remain outstanding and no contact is received from families within the specified time, an interview will be required with the Business Manager/Principal to discuss further action.

4. Families are encouraged to make contact with the Business Manager if they are experiencing difficulties with fee payments:
  - when fee instalments will be late
  - to make other payment arrangements where the standard payment options and/or amounts are not possible due to financial constraints  
The Business Manager has the discretion to negotiate and recommend a payment arrangement and/or fee remission that is suitable to both the family and the College.  
  
Families may be asked to provide financial information to support their application for assistance with reduced fee payments and/or a fee remission. The College will happily discuss alternative arrangements with families who need assistance. ALL families will be expected to make some level of contribution towards fees. A payment arrangement once established, will be expected to be adhered to.
5. Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts by the College to negotiate a fee repayment strategy, further action is possible in individual cases, approved by the Principal and Director of Catholic Education WA.
  - 5.1 If parents make no effort to communicate their issues with fees to the College or refuse to answer communication from the College and/or will not come to an arrangement on fees, then they will be advised that a debt collection agency will be engaged to recover outstanding fees. Families will be notified that any Collection Agency charges will be charged to their family accounts.
  - 5.2 A General Procedure Claim (summons) can be issued against the family and judgement entered, but only once the approval of the Principal of St Mary MacKillop College has been given.
  - 5.3 Before enforcement proceedings are taken (i.e. Property Seizure and Sale Order, Earnings Appropriation Order or any other enforcement action) written approval shall be obtained from the Director of Catholic Education WA.