

With Jesus Christ as our inspiration and guide, we are called to provide high-quality Catholic education in the Diocese of Bathurst'

DIOCESAN SCHOOL FEES POLICY

MISSION AND VALUES

With Jesus Christ as our inspiration and guide and in partnership with the family, parish and community, we are called to provide high quality Catholic education in the Diocese of Bathurst and educate to enable all to make a positive contribution to the world.

We are therefore committed to:

- An acknowledgement and promotion of Catholic education as an integral part of the mission of the Church
- Prudent and careful stewardship of what has been gifted to us
- Just and right relationships that recognise and respect the dignity of each individual
- Diligent and responsible management of resources to promote a sustainable and hope-filled future

Foundation Documents

All Catholic children, not just those whose families have the financial means, have a right to a Catholic education. Vatican documents stress that the Church's preferential option for the poor means that she offers her educational ministry in the first place to those who are poor in the goods of this world.

(The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, 2006)

We realise our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community . . . Individual rights are always expressed within the context of the promotion of the common good.

(Pius XI, The Reconstruction of the Social Order, 1931)

In the early twenty-first century we find that demographic and economic changes have meant that the poor are no longer over-represented in our schools. While our school leaders try to ensure that no child is denied enrolment due to inability to pay school fees, we recognise that financial stress and other factors press many Catholic families to look elsewhere for schooling. A critical indicator of progress will include an increase in the proportion of students in our schools who are from poorer families.

(Catholic Schools at a Crossroads, 2007)

PURPOSE

This policy addresses matters relating to the management of school fees within the Diocese of Bathurst. It allows the Catholic Education Office and school communities to:

- Ensure the centrality of the principles of equity, justice and respect for all families within our school communities
- Ensure that our Diocesan schools offer an affordable option for parent/carers seeking a Catholic education for their child
- Give a practical response to the Church's principles of the common good and a preferential option for the poor
- Maintain high standards of ethical and financial practice
- Ensure consistency and transparency of approach to the setting and collection of school fees across the diocese
- Exercise diligent and responsible management of resources
- Ensure that no family seeking a Catholic education is denied access to enrolment due to genuine financial hardship
- Exercise its pastoral commitment to the families and students whom we serve
- Ensure that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained

EXPECTATIONS

In order to achieve the aims of this Policy, information and processes outlined in this document are mandatory. This Policy will be made available to all stakeholders to ensure transparency and clear understanding. The implementation of the School Fees Policy requires appropriate consultation between Families, the Principal, the Parish Priest and the Catholic Education Office.

POLICY

SCHOOL FEES

Are comprised of the following components:

1. School Services Fees:

On the recommendation of the Diocesan Catholic Education Council, the Bishop of Bathurst approves the schedule of School Services Fee on an annual basis. The schedule of fees applies to all Diocesan systemic schools and is distributed by the Catholic Education Office (CEO) prior to the end of Term Three for the following year. The School Services Fee is charged per student and is designed to meet the core operating costs of the school. Schools collect the School Services Fee locally, with a percentage remitted to the Catholic Education Office.

2. School Based Fees

In addition to the Diocesan School Services Fee, schools may determine School Based Fees. These fees should be designed to ensure that all costs associated with teaching resources and learning activities are covered. A complete breakdown of the school based fees for the following year must be supplied to the Catholic Education Office for approval at the time of the submission of the annual school budget. Fees are levied per student. Broadly, the School based fees are categorised as follows:

- Teaching, Resources and Course specific fees
- Activities fees (eg sport and other additional learning activities)

3. Diocesan Capital Works Levy:

The Capital Works Levy contributes to a centralised fund across the Diocese which is responsible for the repayment of existing loans for school buildings and improvements and for the provision of capital for future school buildings and improvements. On the recommendation of the Diocesan Catholic Education Council, the Bishop of Bathurst approves the Capital Works Levy on an annual

basis. This fee is included in the Schedule of Fees distributed by the Catholic Education Office prior to the end of Term Three for the following year.

The Capital Works Levy is a compulsory Diocesan Levy. It is not retained by the school and is remitted to the Catholic Education Office on a monthly basis. It is charged per family and is not tax-deductible. The Levy is applied to the fees of the oldest child in the family.

At any time during the school year, a school community may make application to the centralised fund for building or improvement works. The application is submitted to the Executive Director of Schools who tables major applications with the Capital Works committee of the Diocesan Finance and Resource Sub-committee for consideration.

SIBLING DISCOUNTS/FAMILY DISCOUNTS

The Sibling Discount applies to School Services Fees only and does not apply to School Based Fees or the Diocesan Capital Works Levy. Discounts will be applied on the receipt of a signed School Fee Agreement ([Appendix 1](#)). The school will refer to the information contained in this Agreement to identify the family unit to which the student belongs and calculate the sibling/family discount appropriately.

Siblings can't be included in more than one family for discount purposes. Where disputed, priority is always with the family where the student resides.

The following sibling/family reductions apply for families who have children currently attending Diocesan Catholic schools. For the purposes of calculating the discount, students who are currently enrolled at St Stanislaus College, Bathurst will be included.

Child 1:	No discount applicable
Child 2:	20% discount for that child
Child 3:	40% discount for that child
Child 4 and More:	60% discount for that child and children beyond

COMMUNICATION REGARDING FEES TO PARENT/CARERS

As part of the enrolment agreement, parents/carers sign a School Fee Agreement acknowledging a commitment to the timely payment of school fees. Each year, school fee information for the following year should be communicated to parent/carers at the end of Term Four.

If there is any change in circumstance for the family eg a change in the number of children attending a school in the Diocese of Bathurst or an alteration to the method of payment, parent/carers are required to complete a further School Fee Agreement, signed by all parties to the enrolment, to ensure that school records are accurate.

INVOICING OF FEES

It is mandatory for all parties to sign the Enrolment Application, Acceptance Forms and School Fee Agreement. It should be understood that parents/carers signing an Enrolment Form are under law, jointly and severally liable for any debt incurred for their child's education at a Diocesan school. This means that each party is liable for 100% of the debt individually. Following family breakdowns, any deliberation to change the invoicing of the school fee account will only be completed on application from both parties. These applications are available from schools. Any change in invoicing eg 50/50 divisions are done to assist families with their financial arrangements, but do not release parties from 100% liability unless forming part of a fee concession arrangement.

Schools are responsible for issuing school fee accounts to families by Week Two in Terms One, Two and Three. An annual invoice will be issued in Term One and followed up by statements in Terms Two and Three. The statement amount will be payable within 14 days.

Schools will make provision for parent/carers to pay in a number of ways eg BPAY, Direct Debit, EFTPOS, Credit Card, Cheque etc. Outstanding fees are pursued in accordance with this Policy ([Appendix 4](#)).

At times it may be necessary for a school to invoice families in an adhoc manner. This type of invoice is generally raised to cover costs associated with wilful damage by a student to school equipment or it may be connected with Fee Relief Applications where schools assist families by invoicing an item to school fees to allow payment over time. Families will be forwarded a new statement of account and a letter explaining the details of any such invoice. Please note: In the case of school fees being paid by periodical payments it may be necessary to adjust the payment amount.

MANAGEMENT OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOL FEES

In keeping with the principle of the Common Good, schools must seek ways to ensure that all parent/carers understand their obligation to pay school fees. The recovery of unpaid fees will be undertaken sensitively. All approaches to parent/carers must be based on appropriate pastoral procedures.

The Management of Outstanding School Fees ([Appendix 4](#)) details the procedures that will be followed in relation to the collection of unpaid fees.

CALCULATION OF FEES IN THE CASE OF EARLY WITHDRAWAL OR LATE ENTRY

For students leaving or enrolling in a school throughout the year, a School Fee Method of Calculation procedure will be applied ([Appendix 3](#)). This invoicing is based on a pro-rata principle where possible; however, where students have accessed activities, received resources, etc. parents/carers will need to pay fees in full. Additionally, any outstanding resource not returned to the school by the leaving date eg library books, equipment, etc. will be invoiced to school fees and payment in full is required.

CHANGING SCHOOLS WITHIN THE DIOCESE

Where an application for enrolment is received by a school for a student coming from another school in the Diocese, the enrolling school must ascertain the status of school fees with the other School before confirming acceptance. This action is completed utilising a School Fees Clearance Notification ([Appendix 2](#)) issued by the school in which the student attends or had attended. Enrolment to the new Catholic school cannot be completed without this clearance notification.

Outstanding fees must be addressed during the enrolment interview. If the family has an arrangement with their previous school due to documented financial hardship and that arrangement has been adhered to, then consideration will be given to whether fee relief on the remaining balance can be given. Following the acquittal of previous school fee accounts, a further arrangement may then be formalised upon acceptance at the new school in relation to accounts issued.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF HARDSHIP

Families in genuine financial hardship will be afforded appropriate assistance in a dignified and confidential manner. Interactions will be respectful, just, compassionate and sympathetic. Families who have the capacity to pay fees and who are not in genuine financial hardship have an obligation to pay fees and will be pursued for non-payment.

Upon formal application at the time of enrolment or when a family experiences financial hardship or difficulty, Fee Relief may be applied. The Principal will determine the portion of fees to be extended or waived on compassionate or financial hardship grounds. Concessions may be granted for up to one year, when the account will be reviewed to determine the requirement for further assistance.

Application for this assistance is sought by families through completion of the Application for Fee Relief in conjunction with an interview with the Principal. These forms are available from schools.

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- Diocesan Governance Framework
- Diocesan Enrolment Policy
- Diocesan Privacy Policy
- Diocesan Standard Collection Notice
- Diocesan Professional Code of Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

This policy has been ratified by the Executive Director of Schools and will be reviewed periodically in consultation with Principals, or in the event of any information or incident that indicates the need for a review, or following relevant legislative or organisational change.

It is the responsibility of anyone accessing this document to ensure that the current version is downloaded from the Catholic Education Office website.

Date of Implementation	From January 2016
Date of Last Review	October 2015
Date for Next Review	2018

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SCHOOL FEE AGREEMENT (APPENDIX 1)

In accordance with the Catholic Education Office – Diocese of Bathurst Enrolment Policy, this School Fee Agreement is reached between (insert School Name) _____ and the parents/carers of:

Student’s Name: _____

Student’s Date of Birth: / /

METHOD OF PAYMENT (PLEASE TICK IN EITHER SECTION A or B)

Please indicate in the following table the method of payment that you will utilise to pay your school fee account:

METHOD OF PAYMENT	Please Tick
I/WE WILL MAKE PAYMENTS BY TERM, THAT IS, WITHIN 14 DAYS OF THE ISSUED INVOICE IN TERMS ONE, TWO AND THREE BY:	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 25%;"> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">A</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #f08080; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> BPAY Please note the preferred method of payment is BPay </div> </div> <div style="width: 25%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> EFTPOS </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> CREDIT CARD <small>(Credit card option will be printed on School Fee Statements)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> CHEQUE <input type="checkbox"/> CASH </div> </div>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OR I/WE WISH TO PAY FEES PERIODICALLY AS FOLLOWS:	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">B</p> <input type="checkbox"/> WEEK </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> FORTNIGHT </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> MONTH </div> </div>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALL PERIODICALLY PAYMENTS WILL BE MADE BY:	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 25%;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #f08080; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> BPAY Please note the preferred method of payment is BPay </div> </div> <div style="width: 25%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT DEBIT </div> <div style="width: 25%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> EFTPOS </div> <div style="width: 25%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> CREDIT CARD <small>(Credit card option will be printed on School Fee Statements)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> CHEQUE <input type="checkbox"/> CASH <input type="checkbox"/> CENTREPAY </div> </div>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I/We undertake to contact the finance office of my child/children’s school to ascertain the amount required for the elected period.	

SCHOOL FEE ACCOUNT BILLING

The following should be noted by parents/carers in relation to account billing:

- Accounts will be addressed to all parties who have signed the enrolment application
- Accounts will be mailed, emailed to only one party or given to the oldest child in a family to take home
- Application may be made to ‘Divide’ fees between parties or ‘Transfer’ fees to others, however, the school may decline this application or reverse the approval if it is not in the best interest of collection. Additionally, parent/carers should be aware of their obligations under the School Fees Policy for any such approval. These applications are available from the school’s finance office.

Please supply an email address for Accounts:

SIBLING/FAMILY DISCOUNT

As set out in the Diocesan School Fees Policy, Sibling/Family Discounts, families must provide information to schools in relation to all children attending Catholic schools in the Diocese. This information will be used to determine eligibility and apply Sibling/Family Discounts.

FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	GENDER	SCHOOL ATTENDING	YEAR

AGREEMENT

- I/We acknowledge as parents/carers, that we are jointly and severally responsible for the payment of school fees in full and/or in accordance with arrangements made.
- I/We understand that the amount of School Fees invoiced by the school will be provided to me/us.
- I/We agree to meet my commitment by the Payment Method indicated on this agreement.
- I/We understand that any costs associated with collection of outstanding school fees will be further invoiced to the school fee account and payment will be required.
- I/We acknowledge that personal information and details of outstanding school fees may be disclosed to outside agencies for debt collection activities should I/we default in payment.
- I/We undertake to contact the school to make amendments should circumstances change that may result in differences to this agreement including but not limited to sibling enrolment, change of bank accounts, change of payment method, etc.
- I/We understand that personal information and details of outstanding school fees will be shared by other schools in the Diocese in which siblings on this form are enrolled.

Parent(s)/Carer(s) Name: _____ Signature: _____

Parent(s)/Carer(s) Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: / /

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SCHOOL FEE CLEARANCE NOTIFICATION (APPENDIX 2)

STUDENT NAME		
DATE OF BIRTH	YEAR GROUP	OUTGOING SCHOOL

- At the date of issue of this School Fee Clearance Notification, there are **no** outstanding issues regarding payment of school fees for this student.
- At the date of issue of this School Fee Clearance Notification, Fee Relief is or has been in place for this family
- At the date of issue of this School Fee Clearance Notification, there **are** outstanding issues regarding payment of school fees for this student as follows:

Principal's Comment (optional): _____

Signature of Principal of Outgoing School: _____

Date: / /

Parents/Carers should note that the School Fee Clearance Notification Form is used to communicate between schools in relation to Enrolment Applications.

Upon receipt of an Enrolment Application, the school where your child/children is/are enrolling will request this information from any previous school in the Diocese. The existence of this interschool communication has been published to parent/carers for transparency purposes.

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SCHOOL FEES METHOD OF CALCULATION GUIDELINES (APPENDIX 3)

The Catholic Education Office and its system of schools are critically aware of the financial commitment that families make in enrolling their children in a Catholic school. In recognition of this, it is important to have in place a 'fair and just' method of calculating fees when students arrive or depart our schools outside normal school commencement and end dates.

GUIDELINES:

The following information gives clarity for all parties in the fee relationship when a student leaves or commences school during the year and therefore does not attend for the full year. It should be noted that schools are under no obligation to refund fees charges and do so out of goodwill. The Principal may use their discretion in certain circumstances in regard to this Policy.

SCHOOL SERVICES FEE

For students who leave/commence part way through the school year, the School Services Fee, including the ICT Levy, are pro-rated. The fees payable will be based on the number of weeks the student is enrolled in the school based on 40 weeks of school term time. The last or first day of attendance by the student is deemed to be their entry or leaving date. In the case of prolonged unexplained absence prior to exiting a school, Principals may deem the last day as that of the formal advice via a Student Exit Form and interview.

CAPITAL WORKS LEVY

The Capital Works Levy is not refundable and payment in full is required.

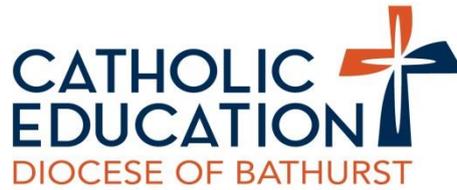
SCHOOL BASED FEES

School Based fees cover three broad categories within a school. As a general rule, the fees will be pro-rated, however, where an element within a category of school based fees cannot be pro-rated because of the way in which the cost is incurred, the school will provide a detailed explanation for parents. Additionally, where a student has accessed activities, received resources, etc. parents/carers will need to pay fees in full.

OUTSTANDING RESOURCES

Any outstanding resource not returned to the school by the leaving date eg library books, equipment, etc. will be invoiced to school fees and payment in full is required. Adjustments may be made on return.

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MANAGEMENT OF OUTSTANDING SCHOOL FEES (APPENDIX 4)

It is the responsibility of the Principal of individual schools, in accordance with Diocesan policy and guidelines, to manage the collection of school fees. This process ensures that a consistent, fair and just approach is provided. The Principal’s actions will be guided by the following documents:

- Diocesan Enrolment Policy
- Diocesan School Fees Policy
- Applications for Enrolment
- School Fee Agreement (*Appendix 1*)
- Application for Fee Relief

Parents/carers should be aware that Fee Relief is granted through a formal process. Applications for Fee Relief are available on the Catholic Education Office, schools’ websites and through the schools’ finance offices. Applications will require an interview with the Principal to determine the nature of the concession granted.

The following flow chart provides a summary of the process for school fee collection in the Diocese of Bathurst:

