



# SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION

CECWA: Stewardship C2-12

## 1. 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 preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Mandate page 50).<sup>1</sup> Schools have a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which they operate to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools. Parents are required 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.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1 School Fees:

For the purpose of this policy statement School Fees shall be considered to be tuition fees, levies and other charges (e.g. excursions, camp fees, amenities, books).

### 2.2 Application for Enrolment Fee:

The fee associated with processing an application for student enrolment into a school and shall set at a maximum of \$35.00 or 1% of tuition fees, whichever is greatest.

### 2.3 Acceptance of Enrolment Fee:

The fee associated with securing a student enrolment into a school after an offer of enrolment has been made by the school and shall be no more than 25% of the annual tuition fee. This fee shall be deducted from the first semester's tuition fees in the year of enrolment. Where circumstances beyond the control of parents result in an acceptance of enrolment not being fulfilled, the principal shall give consideration to a refund of the Acceptance of Enrolment Fee.

### 2.4 Role of School Boards or School Councils:

In diocesan accountable schools, Boards or Councils have a managerial role with regard to the setting and collecting of school fees.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia. **Policy statement 2-C12 School Fees: Setting and Collection (Version 5 – 2009) Page 2 of 4**

## 4. Principles

4.1 The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.

4.2 Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from Sacred Heart School

4.3 The CECWA shall ensure the financial viability of group funded schools.

4.4 The Sacred Heart School Board, or School Council in the relevant Order accountable schools, has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.

4.5 Sacred Heart School shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.

4.6 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.

4.7 Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.

- 4.8 The withholding of access to students of normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
- 4.9 Every effort shall be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees.
- 4.10 Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

**5. Procedures**

- 5.1 The Sacred Heart School Board sets annual fees and charges including maximum increases in accordance with CECWA advice provided during the budget process each year. Written approval from the Director of Catholic Education must be sort to exceed the maximum increase in school fees and charges.
- 5.2 We recognise the Church’s preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged. We have implemented CECWA’s decision to give automatic tuition fee discounts for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. CEO will inform schools of the fee level during the budget process each year.
- 5.3 We ensure that family discounts are offered for Special Education students whether siblings attend Sacred Heart School or other Catholic schools.
- 5.4 The level of sibling discount is determined by the Sacred Heart School Board in line with the following guide as set by CECWA:

1 <sup>st</sup> child	0 %
2 <sup>nd</sup> child	20 % of that child’s tuition fee
3 <sup>rd</sup> child	40 % of that child’s tuition fee
4 <sup>th</sup> child and beyond	100% of that child’s tuition fee

Kindergarten fees will be charged as a proportion (0.6FTE) of the respective first child’s full time fee.

- 5.5 On application for enrolment parents are provided with the School Fees Policy - Setting and Collection and the Fee Schedule which identifies the components that make up the overall school fees. At the time of interview for enrolment further clarification is given as required. Acknowledgment of the Fee Collection procedures on the ‘Application for Enrolment’ form will be signed by parents or guardians. In the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian one signature will suffice.
- 5.6 Accounts will be distributed by the end of Week two of Terms One, Two and Three and payment is requested by the fifth week of these three terms. The Tuition Fees, Building Levy and all other compulsory items will be divided over Terms One, Two and Three.
- 5.7 To assist parents with their school accounts we have various options to suit individual families; full year, each term for Terms One, Two and Three, Direct Debit, fortnightly, monthly or regular small payments over the three terms.
- 5.5 Overdue fees after Friday of Week Five will attract an Administration Fee of \$30.00.  
**The following process will be followed and undertaken by the Principal if fees are not paid within the specified time.**

If payment is not received by Friday of Week Five:

STEP 1 - a letter sent by mail as a friendly reminder of late fee payment in Week Six.

If payment is not received by Friday of Week Eight:

STEP 2 - a letter sent by mail requesting an interview of which the date and time has been set. Interview times can be negotiated with the parent at both the convenience of the parent and the principal. Interviews will be held in Week Nine. Negotiation of the method of payment and/or the need for concession will be discussed.

If parent does not attend interview or has not responded by Friday of Week Nine:

- STEP 3 - a letter sent by mail informing the parent / guardian that their account has been handed over to Austral Mercantile Collections – a Licensed Commercial Agent to follow up for late/non payment of fees.

The principal will ensure that, prior to legal action; all reasonable efforts have been made to contact parents and/or guardians in order to resolve fee payment issues. Where parents and/or guardians have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee payment strategy and further action required:

- documentation will be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees
- parents and/or guardians will be notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor will be engaged to recover outstanding fees and any additional costs will be added to the account in accordance with the School Fee policy
- Sacred Heart School will engage the service of a debt collection agency or solicitor who undertakes to comply with the ACCC, Trade Practices Act (TPA) and ASIC Debt Collection Guideline: for collectors and creditors
- a General Procedure Claim (summons) can be issued by the appropriate school authority via the debt collection agency engaged and judgement entered against the parent. Before enforcement proceedings are taken, such as a Property Seizure and Sale Order, Earnings Appropriation Order, or any other enforcement action, written approval will be obtained from the Director of Catholic Education.

All documentation will be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees.

## 6. REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

ACCC, Trade Practices Act (TPA)

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)

Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) Debt Collection Guideline: for collectors and creditors

## 8. REVIEW HISTORY

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
1994	SRC	Originally Released as 'Collection of School Fees'
1995	SRC	Reviewed
1999	SRC	Reviewed
2006	SRC	Reviewed and Renamed
2009	SRC	Reviewed
2010	CEOWA	Reformatted

## 9. NEXT REVIEW

Year:	CEOWA Standing Committee Responsibilities
2012	School Resources Committee