



## **Fee Setting, Communication and Collection Guidelines**

### **Purpose**

This guideline provides guidance for the execution of the CECWA School Fees Executive Directive and School Fees Directive.

- Sources of Authority
  - CECWA Policy – School Fees Directives
  - Executive Directive – School Fees Executive Directive

### **Scope**

This guideline applies to the Principal, Sacred Heart School, in the setting, communication and collection of school fees.

### **Guidelines**

#### ***School Fees***

##### *Fee Communication Process*

Fee Communication must be consistent with CECWA School Fees Directives.

1. School fees must be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year.
2. Fees and all discounts, including CECWA's Health Care Card Tuition Discount Scheme, must be clearly advertised and easily accessible. This includes fee brochures, school websites and newsletters.
3. The principal must update the school community with any changes to school fees to reflect:
  - a. any changes arising from changes to the CECWA Directive;
  - b. any legislative changes, and;
  - c. any community socio-economic considerations
4. On the application for admission, parents and/or guardians will be provided with the school's fee schedule.
5. Acknowledgment of the fee collection procedures shall be on the Application for Enrolment form which shall be signed by the parents. In the case of a sole custodial parent, one signature will suffice.
6. The following information must be available to parents relating to the school's fee procedures:
  - a. a recognition of the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged;
  - b. details of school fees as well as information relating to the discounts and fee concessions defined in this Directive;
  - c. a timeline for the payment of accounts;
  - d. a process for negotiating the method of payment and the provision of other special concessions;
  - e. debt collection procedures following non-payment, up to and including decision;
  - f. information regarding access to government assistance.
7. A full statement of fees payable for the year must be provided to each parent at the start of the school year and periodic statements should follow on request.

### **Fee Setting Process**

Fee Setting must be consistent with CECWA School Fees Directives.

1. CECWA will determine the maximum total School Fee increase and communicate this to each school on an annual basis.
2. Increases to total School Fees shall not exceed the maximum increase set by CECWA unless the school has obtained the prior written approval of the Executive Director of Catholic Education.
3. Application fees shall not exceed the greater of \$55.00 or 1% of the school annual tuition fee. Application fees are non-refundable.
4. Enrolment deposits shall not exceed 25% of the annual tuition fee and shall be refunded off the parent's account in the first semester of the year of enrolment.
5. Enrolment deposits for students who do not commence at the school are generally not refundable but can be refunded at the discretion of the principal.
6. Kindergarten tuition fees shall be charged as a proportion of the respective Year 1 tuition fee. The specific proportion shall be equal to the FTE of the Kindergarten program that the school runs.
7. Annual School Fees must be endorsed by the School Advisory Council during the budget process annually.

### **Fee Discounts Process**

#### *Fee Discounts*

1. The following School Fee discounts and concessions are offered:
  - a. Family discount for siblings;
  - b. Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount;
  - c. Special concessions and other discounts.
2. The Principal may, from time to time, request financial information from parents to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
3. Families with limited capacity to pay fees have the ability to request a fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness and compassion.

#### **Family Discount for Siblings**

Families with siblings enrolled in Kindergarten through to Year 6 in the same Catholic school are entitled to a family discount as follows:

- 1st Child Full Tuition Fee
- 2nd Child 20% Discount
- 3rd Child 40% Discount
- 4th Child 100% Discount

Sibling discounts apply to Kindergarten students.

#### **Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount**

1. The Health Care Card Discount Scheme provides an automatic fee concession for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. This discount applies across all year levels, from Kindergarten to Year 6.
2. Discounts are provided for tuition fees (billed per student) and building levies (billed per family).

3. Families with two or more children enrolled in the same Catholic school are eligible for further fee discounts as laid out in the “Family Discounts for Siblings” section above.
4. The total discounted school fees for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards are set as \$300 per student.
5. These school fees shall be annually reviewed by the CECWA, based on changes to the eligibility income thresholds, and shall be communicated to schools during the budget process each year.
6. Family building levies shall be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee for the eldest sibling as follows:
  - a. Kindergarten 30% of the HCC fee being \$90 per family.
  - b. Primary (Pre-Primary to Year 6) 30% of the HCC fee being \$90 per family.
7. Principals may add additional charges for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. These may be levied on a user-pays basis for other activities where there are direct and additional costs associated with such activities.
8. Principals are encouraged to keep these costs to a minimum and assist those families who encounter difficulties in meeting these additional charges.
9. Full details of the Health Care Card Tuition Discount Scheme are available for schools in the *Health Care Card Tuition Discount Scheme - Supporting Guidelines*.

### **Special Concessions and Other Discounts**

1. The Principal may receive requests for special fee concessions and discounts from parents due to a variety of circumstances.
2. The Principal may determine an appropriate fee concession after considering the parent’s financial capacity to pay, the school’s financial position and the approved budget for special fee concessions.

### ***Fee Collection Process***

#### *Fee Collection*

1. Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in a school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.
2. Principals must ensure school’s fee procedures for fee collection are consistent with the process within the CECWA School Fees Directives.
3. Schools must facilitate multiple ways and frequencies for parents to pay e.g. debit card, credit card, direct debit or bank transfer; and weekly, monthly, per term or yearly.
4. The recovery of overdue fees must be approached pastorally and sensitively, particularly if this involves legal action.
5. Principals must keep comprehensive documentation of each attempt to resolve the problems of overdue fees.
6. The following actions should be taken when collecting overdue fees: A written communication must be sent to the parents, bringing to their attention the overdue balance.
  - a. Should there be no response within 14 days, the school should contact the parent/s by phone to discuss the overdue fees and payment options.
  - b. If an arrangement to discuss the overdue fees cannot be made, or no action results after another 14 days, a formal registered letter from the Principal should be sent to remind parents of their financial obligations. This letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the school

and a specified timeframe for a response. Refer to *Letter 1: Fee Obligations* in the *Appendix 1* document.

- c. Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter (*Letter 1: Fee Obligations*), the Principal must send a formal registered letter with a final notice. The letter should seek payment and outline the possible outcomes if payment is not received within the specified timeframe. This could include legal action. Refer to *Letter 2: Final Fee Notice* in the *Appendix 2* document.
- d. Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter (*Letter 2: Final Fee Notice*), the Principal may engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover overdue fees and any additional costs.
- e. If the debt collection agent is not successful in contacting the parents or in establishing a debt repayment plan, the Principal may consider initiating court proceedings through a General Procedure Claim to obtain judgement. Refer to *How to Commence a General Procedure Claim* on the QCE Policy Hub: *School Fees Directives CECWA Policy*. Before this is done, the Principal shall inform in writing the Executive Director of CEWA Limited.
- f. Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, the Principal must obtain written approval from the Executive Director of CEWA Limited. Refer to *Enforcing a Judgement* on the QCE Policy Hub: *School Fees Directives CECWA Policy*.

[CEWA Limited School Fees Policy](#)

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