



# School Fees Collection Guidelines and Procedures

## 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, while embodying the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Mandate, p 50), insofar as this is possible.

Irene McCormack Catholic College aims to minimise potential barriers for parents such as fees and other costs (Mandate, p 7), and to keep costs to parents as low as possible (Mandate p, 38). Additionally, Irene McCormack Catholic College aims to avoid material ambitions that might lead to higher fees and force them into giving counter-witness (Mandate, p. 22).

Irene McCormack Catholic College will seek to communicate the financial constraints under which the College operates to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools.

Parents are required to make a commitment to support Irene McCormack Catholic College financially by paying fees as a necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

Sources of Authority	
CECWA Policy	Stewardship
Executive Directive	School Fees Debt and Cash Management

## PURPOSE

This guideline outlines the process for the collection of tuition fees and levies at Irene McCormack Catholic College.

The guideline provides a staged process for the follow-up and collection of unpaid fees and levies.

## PRINCIPLES

1. Fees and levies shall reflect the financial capacity of the school's community to contribute.
2. Parents and/or guardians with limited capacity to pay school fees may request a school fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness and compassion.
3. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards (Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card) shall have an automatic entitlement to school fee concessions.
4. Where parents have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.
5. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
6. Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from Irene McCormack Catholic College.

7. Withholding student access from normal pastoral and curriculum provision shall not be used as a fee collection strategy.
8. The confidentiality of all information pertaining to school fee arrangements with parents, guardians and students shall be maintained.

## **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Fee Setting Process**

1. CECWA will advise the College of the maximum total increase to the Tuition Fee each year.
2. Increases to total Tuition Fees shall not exceed the maximum increase set by CECWA.
3. The College shall seek written approval from the Executive Director of Catholic Education if an increase above the maximum fee increase is deemed necessary.
4. The enrolment application fee shall not exceed the greater of \$55.00 or 1% of the school annual tuition fee. The enrolment application fee is non-refundable.
5. Enrolment deposits shall not exceed 25% of the annual tuition fee and shall be deducted off the parent's account in the first semester of the year of enrolment. Enrolment deposits for students who do not commence at the school are not refundable but may be refunded at the discretion of the Principal.
6. The annual School Fees shall be endorsed by the College Advisory Council during the annual budget process.

### **Fee Discounts Process**

#### **Fee Discounts**

1. The following School Fee discounts and concessions may be offered by Irene McCormack Catholic College:
  - I. Family discount for siblings;
  - II. Multiple school family discount for siblings. Currently offered to families attending St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School and St. Andrews Catholic Primary School;
  - III. Early payment discount;
  - IV. Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount; and
  - V. Special concessions and other discounts.
2. The College 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.
4. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness and compassion.

#### **Family discount for siblings**

1. Families with siblings at Irene McCormack Catholic College are entitled to a family discount as determined by the Principal.
2. CECWA advises the following family discounts:

2nd Child enrolled	20% of that child's tuition fees
3rd child enrolled	40% of that child's tuition fees
4th child enrolled and beyond	100% of that child's tuition fees

3. Parents who receive the Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount are also eligible for family discounts for siblings.

### **Multiple school family discount for siblings**

1. Consideration shall be given to family fee discounts in situations where families have children enrolled in more than one Catholic school. This currently applies to families with siblings attending St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School and St Andrews Catholic Primary School.

### **Early Payment Discount**

Families who are not in receipt of any other discounts and who pay their Annual Family Fee Statement in full by 29 February 2024, will receive a discount of \$200 per child.

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

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 Year 7 to Year 12.

1. **Tuition Fee:** Currently in Years 7 to 12, eligible means tested family concession card holders shall have their Tuition Fee discounted to a total of \$1500. This amount is set annually by CECWA based on eligibility income thresholds and is communicated to schools during the budget process each year.
2. **Building Levy:** The family building levy shall be charged at 20% of the Health Care Card Tuition Fee for the eldest sibling, which is currently set at 20% of \$1500 or \$300.
3. **Other Levies:** Additional levies may apply for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. These may be levied on a user-pays basis and could include charges associated with VET courses, camps, music lessons and other activities where there are direct and additional costs associated with such activities. Discounts do not apply to these levies. Full details of the Health Care Card Discount Scheme are detailed in the ***Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount Scheme – Supporting Guidelines***.

### **Special concessions and other discounts**

1. In discussion with the College Business Manager, the Principal may consider requests for special fee concessions and discounts from parents due to a variety of circumstances.
2. Parents seeking special concessions and discounts must complete a detailed questionnaire itemising all income and expenditure and provide supporting documentation that may include bank statements, pay slips, and tax returns.
3. 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.

### **Withdrawal of a Student**

For students withdrawing from the College, 10 school weeks (1 Term) notice in writing must be given to the Principal prior to the student's withdrawal date. Failure to give such notice will result in 10 school weeks (1 Term) being charged in lieu of notice.

### **Optional Excursions, Camps, and other Activities**

Students may not be eligible to participate in optional excursions, camps, and trips if fees and charges are in arrears or where the student's behaviour is of concern.

### **Fee Collection Process**

#### **Fee Collection**


1. Families shall be advised of the Fees and Charges for the new school year as soon as possible after approval by the College Advisory Council.
2. The schedule of Fees and Charges for the new year shall be placed on the College website as soon as possible after approval by the College Advisory Council, preferably prior to the end of the current school year.
3. The College shall facilitate multiple ways and frequencies for parents to pay their accounts

including debit card, credit card, direct debit or bank transfer; and weekly, monthly, per term or yearly.

4. **Initial Letter:** Annual Fees and Charges statements shall be issued to parents by the end of the first week in February each year. Parents must advise the College of their preferred payment option by the end of week three in February each year.
5. Payment options shall commence from the end of week four in February and calculated to clear all payments by the end of October each year.

#### **Recovery of overdue Fees and Charges**

6. The recovery of overdue fees shall be approached pastorally and sensitively, particularly if legal action is considered.
7. The Business Manager shall ensure comprehensive documentation is made and kept of each attempt to resolve the problems of overdue fees. A record of all communications is to be kept in AoS.
8. Phone conversations or face-to-face meetings are preferred as a first option when following up overdue accounts.
9. The following actions shall be taken when collecting overdue fees:
  - I. Whether phone contact with the parent/s has been possible, or not, a reminder email is to be sent through AoS (Debtor Letter 1). This provides a copy of the statement and highlights the account as either being overdue or outside of the payment arrangements.
  - II. 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.
  - III. If an arrangement to discuss the overdue fees cannot be made, or no action results after 14 days of the first letter, a formal registered letter (Debtor Letter 2) from the Principal should be sent to remind parents of their financial obligations. The letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the Finance Office/Business Manager and a specified timeframe for a response.
  - IV. Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the Second Letter, the Principal shall send a formal registered letter (Debtor Letter 3) with a final notice. The letter shall seek payment and outline the possible outcomes if payment is not received within the specified timeframe. This could include the use of debt collection services and/or legal action.
  - V. Should there be no response or action within a further fourteen (14) days of the third letter, the Principal may engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover overdue fees and any additional costs.
  - VI. 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**. Before this is done, the Principal shall inform in writing the Executive Director of Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA).
  - VII. Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, the Principal must obtain written approval from the Executive Director of CEWA.

Authorised by:	Peter Collins	Signature:	
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