

Saint Mary's Catholic College

Prep to Year 12

***A Catholic co-educational College
in the Benedictine Tradition.***



Fees Policy

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Rationale

Saint Mary's Catholic College is committed to providing faith based education to families in the South Burnett, acknowledging the diversity of cultural and socio economic circumstances. The fees and levies collected at Saint Mary's Catholic College are essential in providing quality Catholic education for all enrolled students. These contribute to staffing, essential resources, facilities and equipment and the maintenance of buildings and grounds.

As a Catholic College we seek to be a place where all members of the community are invited to grow in their knowledge and love of God and to embrace the Gospel. The values of justice, equity, dignity and concern for the underprivileged in the community underpin the mission of the College and every aspect of College life.

Fees and levies are set on an annual basis with the purpose of addressing the difference between funding offered through the State and Commonwealth Government and the funds required to meet the necessary developmental and operational costs of the College.

An essential consideration in setting the annual fees is the need to maintain a balance between ensuring the accessibility of Catholic education for all those who seek this and the need to maintain the level of resourcing necessary for effective development and operation.

The College fees schedule is set on an annual basis in consultation with the College Board and is in alignment with the suggested schedule provided by Brisbane Catholic Education.

The spirit of compassion and fairness must clearly underpin the fee collection process especially in terms of sensitivity to the marginalized and disenfranchised within our community. It is imperative that a spirit of charity and respect for the dignity of the individual be embedded in all aspects of the process.

This policy will be administered in accordance with Brisbane Catholic Education guidelines noting that it is the responsibility of all families to contribute to the education of their children in Catholic schools and that no Catholic child is excluded from Catholic schools on the grounds of genuine inability of families to pay fees.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that

- An understanding of the Fees Policy is confirmed on enrolment
- Avenues to support families in need are explored and made available to all families who may need assistance
- Parents are kept well informed regarding all aspects of the College fees process and schedule
- The Fees Policy is implemented appropriately, that being in a just and respectful manner
- Allowance is made in the operational budget for fees adjustments
- Privacy and confidentiality is maintained regarding all fee based discussions and arrangements with the College.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers

- To commit to the responsibility of paying fees at the times of enrolment
- To ensure that fees are paid in the agreed manner
- To be honest in their dealings with the College
- To show genuine respect for the circumstances of other parents and carers within the College community
- To ensure privacy and confidentiality is maintained regarding all fee based discussions and arrangements with the College.

Schedule

Following Board consultation, the established Fee Schedule is to be published prior to the close of the academic year. This schedule will clearly indicate all elements of fees including appropriate discounts for families.

The statement will show the following:

- Single Child Fee or Family tuition fee
- Levies to support broad learning experiences
- Parents and Friends' Levy - charged by the P&F Association to provide additional benefits to the school
- Capital Levy - used to maintain or provide new buildings and ground enhancements
- Transport Fees.

College fees will be issued each term, with the due date for payment being two weeks from the date of issue. Statements will be emailed to families with current email addresses and mailed to families without email addresses. ***All fees and levies are to be finalised by the end of November unless an agreed payment plan is in place.***

Families wishing to pay their annual account in full ***by 28 February, will be entitled to a 5% discount on their tuition fees.***

A reminder notice will be issued for all accounts that have not been addressed by the due date.

Parents/carers have two weeks from the issuing of the reminder notice to either confirm payment arrangements or to make an appointment to discuss an alternative method of payment.

Parents/carers who are experiencing difficulty in paying their account are expected to contact the College as soon as possible to enable appropriate support mechanisms to be put in place.

On occasions parents/carers fail to pay their account, do not respond to reminder notices and do not contact the College to make alternate arrangements. In these instances the College is reluctantly forced to engage the services of a professional debt collection agency.

A first and final letter will be issued to the parent/carer who fail to confirm payment arrangements for outstanding fees noting the need to instigate a more formal process for the collection if a payment arrangement is not entered into by the specified date.

Parents/carers need to be aware that additional charges will be incurred once the account has been handed to the debt collection agency for action. All negotiations for payment must then be made through the debt collection agencies.

The College will instigate legal action to recover unpaid fees only after all other avenues have been exhausted.

Payment Options

The College offers a variety of modes of payment to suit individual family needs. Payment may be made by:

- Cash, although this can only be made in person by an adult with a receipt being obtained at the time of payment
- Cheque
- Credit/debit card
- EFTPOS

- Direct Debit facilities
- Centrelink direct payment facility (current enrolled families only)
- BPay.

Requests for the inclusion of costs for other aspects of College life such as uniforms are not permitted on the fees account. These are to be addressed independently.

Tuition Concessions

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure all avenues for support of families experiencing financial hardship are made available to all parents/carers. In cases of financial hardship the Principal will consider offering a concession on Tuition Fees and selected Student Levy Expenses. Concessions are granted on an annual basis and applications must be resubmitted at the commencement of each new school year by the set date for renewal/renegotiation. Concessions are means tested in line with Federal Government Poverty Guidelines. The assessment process takes all income into consideration including Wages, Youth Allowance, all other Centrelink payments etc, as well as housing costs e.g. rent or mortgage.

All payment arrangements are made at the discretion of the Principal based on a pastoral interview and the completion of all required documentation.

A written confirmation of financial arrangements will be sent to parents/carers. Direct debit payments are a requirement for all concessional fees.

The Principal will seek the advice of the Parish Priest and College Board for situations that cannot be resolved through the regular processes.

Additional Considerations

It is appreciated that changing family circumstances will sometimes require that a student transfer to another school. Fees will be payable for the whole of the term in which the enrolment is terminated, except in cases where fair notice (one term) is given or where it is deemed that fair notice was impractical. Completion of a departure form is required for students leaving the College. If withdrawal from the College is for family circumstances, parents/carers may apply for a refund calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Pro-rata fees will be issued for students who enter the College during the year.

Payment arrangement of fees for children whose parents are not living together are to be confirmed on enrolment or on the change of family circumstances. These arrangements must be confirmed between the family parties at the time of enrolment or times of separation.

Special circumstances will only be determined following discussion with the Principal.

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