School Policy

Fees

Next Review Due: February 2018
DEFINITIONS
The School  St Joseph’s School
SACCS  The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools
CEO  Catholic Education Office
SES  Socio Economic Status
DECD  Department for Education and Child Development

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS
St Joseph’s School, Port Lincoln is a Reception to Year 12 Catholic co-educational Boarding School serving the educational needs of families of Port Lincoln and the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia in the tradition of Saint Mary MacKillop and St Joseph, where faith, hope and love are the hallmarks of learning.

AIM
St Joseph’s School will set fees at a level to maintain quality education for the students whilst having consideration for the financial capacity of the community we serve.

OBJECTIVES
The School Board will ensure that the financial responsibilities of all families are met as to their agreed obligations by having a systematic and identifiable procedure for the imposition and collection of fees, thus ensuring the financial well-being of the school.

CLARIFICATION PROCEDURE
In order to meet its requirements the school charges fees and the following policy provides the guidelines for the setting, collection and remission of these fees.

As with all Catholic Schools, St Joseph’s School receives some Australian and State Government funding. However, the school is dependent upon income from school fees for the provision of educational facilities and resources, payment of day to day operational works and capital works, in order to provide a contemporary education for our students.

It is the responsibility of the School Board to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to enable the collection of school fees. Parents / caregivers make a commitment to pay school fees when they sign the Enrolment form, prior to their child commencing at St Joseph’s School.

The Finance Subcommittee of the School Board has oversight of the collection of fees and will review outstanding fees on an ongoing basis. This committee reports to the Board the status of fee collection. Please note that all family details remain confidential at all times.

St Joseph’s School operates within the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) guidelines for the maintenance of private income.

Families who qualify for support under the Government of South Australia School Card scheme must not be required to pay full fees.

School fees and charges are set in light of the school’s Five Year Plan which has been prepared in consultation with the Finance Team of the Catholic Education Office. The level of the school’s Socio-economic Status (SES) score and the Annual Guidelines set by the CEO guide decisions about fees and charges.
**FEE STRUCTURE**

St Joseph’s School will set an annual fee each year comprising:

- Tuition Fee
- Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Sustainability Charge
- Building Levy
- Activity Fee
- Boarding Fee (if applicable)

**Tuition Fee**
Tuition fees are payable to support the operational costs of the school not met by the Australian and State Government funding received by the school.

**ICT Sustainability Charge**
This charge is used to pay for loans, leasing fees and replacement costs for the infrastructure and ongoing maintenance and support of the computer facilities and equipment. This charge enables the school to develop and maintain state of the art ICT resources to support and enhance student learning. An ICT Sustainability Charge account is issued for each family once a year and it is non-refundable.

**Building Levy**
This levy is used to pay for existing capital works loans as well as the cost of refurbishment of the school’s buildings. The Building Levy is compulsory and cannot be claimed as a tax deduction. A Building Levy account is issued for each family once a year and it is non-refundable.

**Activity Fee**
This Curriculum Activity fee covers the cost of programmed activities where the expectation is that all students participate. This fee will cover year level camps, retreats and swimming. This fee has evolved from looking at the cost to families of camps, retreats and swimming and spreading the cost of these curriculum based activities over a student’s enrolment at St Joseph’s School. This fee is charged for each student once a year and it is non-refundable. This fee does not cover other activities such as excursions and visiting performances for instance.

**Boarding Fee**
The Boarding fee covers the cost of accommodation and food for boarders staying at the Boarding House.

**SCHEDULE OF FEES**
The Finance Committee will be formed annually to oversee all matters relating to the setting of fees, remissions and collections. This Committee will consist of the Principal, Business Manager and not more than two elected members of the School Board. One such elected member will chair the meetings.

Once the Finance Committee sets the school fees they will be approved by the School Board and notification will be given to parents / caregivers before the end of the school year.

On application for enrolment, parents / caregivers will be provided with the annual ‘Schedule of Fees’. Prospective parents / caregivers will also be informed that on enrolment of their child, they accept the responsibility for the payment of fees and other costs associated with the education of their children. Parents / caregivers make a commitment to pay school fees when they sign the ‘Application for Enrolment’ form for our school.
FAMILY DISCOUNTS
Tuition fee reduction is given to families with two or more children attending the School (as outlined in the ‘Schedule of Fees’).

SCHOOL CARD
The Government of South Australia offers assistance for families via the School Card scheme. Families on low incomes are encouraged to apply for government assistance under the School Card scheme. It is important that parents / caregivers work with the school to complete the necessary documentation as there are administrative cut-off dates (determined by the Department for Education and Child Development) that apply each term, and need to be complied with in order to receive funds for each eligible child.

Families eligible and approved for School Card will automatically receive a 75% reduction in their tuition fees.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP
Where families are suffering financial hardship, they are encouraged to complete a ‘Financial Assistance Application’ form, accompanied by a letter outlining the reasons for the application. All applications are treated as confidential. Failure to adhere to a revised payment plan will be treated as an overdue account.

Any reduction in tuition fees will be considered in terms of the financial needs of the family and of the School Board’s responsibility to families who are making the effort to pay regular fees.

Families are granted a reduction of tuition fees for the current year only, after which time they would need to reapply in future years if their financial circumstances have not improved.

Likewise, it will be seen as the family’s responsibility to make good all or part of any reductions if their financial position improves markedly.

Families are encouraged to:
- Complete and submit a ‘Financial Assistance Application’ form with accompanying letter.
- Make an appointment and meet with the Principal if they have difficulty in paying fees so that the necessary steps for financial assistance can be discussed.
- Apply to the School Finance Officer to pay by instalments if this payment option is easier. Payment by instalments can include direct debit or Centrelink deductions and payment schedules can be arranged.

PAYMENT OF FEES
St Joseph’s School supports the concept of equitable financial responsibility for all members of its community and part payments of fees by the due date or by way of regular payments is part of the process.

To achieve this goal, the school encourages regular communication between all parties in relation to the payment of fees.

Direct debit is our preferred fee payment option, however, accounts can also be paid by internet transfer, cash, EFTPOS, cheque, credit card and salary or Centrelink deductions. Families are encouraged to make regular payments through direct debits to assist them in meeting their commitments. Direct debits may be established for payment by either:

- Full payment due 24th February (qualify for the 5% tuition fee discount – full fee paying families only)

- 21 fortnightly payments from February to November
  (beginning on the 2nd Tuesday of February then fortnightly thereafter)

- 21 fortnightly payments from February to November
  (beginning on the 3rd Tuesday of February then fortnightly thereafter)
FEE COLLECTION TIMELINES

Fees (including boarding fee if applicable) – statements of account

- Term 1 – The annual statement of account for fees (including boarding fee if applicable) will be distributed to families in February.
- By Week 2 of Terms 2, 3 & 4 – statements of account will be issued as a reminder and confirmation of payments received.

Fees (including boarding fee if applicable) – payment timelines

- By the end of Terms 1, 2, & 3 – unless an alternative payment option has been arranged and approved (for instance fortnightly payments via direct debits), one third of the annual invoice will be due for payment. Families are reminded about the payment of fees and personal contact should be made with the school if there are any difficulties.
- Where payment has not been made, or an alternative arrangement established with the Principal or School Finance Officer, a second reminder account together with a letter from the School Finance Officer will be sent by post stating that full payment will be expected within 14 days.
- If no response is forthcoming after the second reminder letter is posted, contact will be made by the Principal / Business Manager or their representative. Contact will be either by telephone or letter and may include an invitation to attend an interview. Failure to respond within 7 days will result in further action being taken.
- Such action may include referral to a debt collection agency.
- Arrangements for payment of fees by families who leave the school community during the school year must be discussed with the Principal with the understanding that for fee reimbursement, notice of one term is required.

DEBT COLLECTION AGENCY

Where fees remain outstanding with no agreed arrangement for payment, the account may be passed to the school’s debt collection agency, who may if directed:

- refer to solicitors.
- take Court action to recover the fees, where deemed appropriate.

The debt collection agency will be engaged when students have left the school and all other means to recover outstanding fees have been exhausted.

The debt collection agency will also be engaged when no reasonable attempt has been made to reduce an outstanding account for current students, or no response made to letters and / or phone calls inviting them to come to the school and discuss the fees owing.

Parents are advised that any costs incurred in the use of the debt collection agency will be billed to their account.

Once the collection agency has been engaged, parents are required to work through the agency for settlement of their account.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INVOICING FEES FOR STUDENTS COMMENCING PART WAY THROUGH THE YEAR

Invoicing Fees (including levies and charges)
All families will be charged fees as per the fee structure set for that school year. One account is generated at the beginning of the school year to cover the full year’s fees unless the student starts part way through the year.

If a student commences at St Joseph’s School part way through the year the following will apply:
- If a student starts school before Week 6 of Term 1, the full year’s fees and levies will be charged as normal
- If a student starts school between Week 6 and Week 10 of Term 1, 90% of the fees and levies will be charged
- If a student starts school between Week 1 and Week 5 of Term 2, 75% of the fees and levies will be charged
- If a student starts school between Week 6 and Week 10 of Term 2, 60% of the fees and levies will be charged
- If a student starts school in Term 3, 50% of the fees and levies will be charged
- If a student starts school in Term 4, 30% of the fees and levies will be charged

Invoicing Boarding Fees
If a student attends the Boarding House the family will be invoiced for the boarding fee in full at the beginning of the school year unless the student joins the Boarding House part way through the year.

If a student joins the St Joseph's School Boarding House part way through the year the following will apply:
- If a student joins the Boarding House before Week 6 of Term 1, the full year’s boarding fee will be charged as normal
- If a student joins the Boarding House between Week 6 of Term 1 and Week 5 of Term 2, 90% of the boarding fee will be charged
- If a student joins the Boarding House between Week 6 and Week 10 of Term 2, 75% of the boarding fee will be charged
- If a student joins the Boarding House in Term 3, 60% of the boarding fee will be charged
- If a student joins the Boarding House in Term 4, 30% of the boarding fee will be charged
APPENDIX B: REFUNDING FEES FOR STUDENTS LEAVING PART WAY THROUGH THE YEAR

Refunding Tuition Fees

Please note that the ICT Sustainability Charge, Building Levy and Activity Fee are non-refundable.

If a student is leaving St Joseph's School part way through the year the following will apply.

If a student leaves school:
- Before Week 4 of Term 1 a 90% refund of the tuition fee only will be given
- Between Week 4 of Term 1 and Week 3 of Term 2 a 75% refund of the tuition fee only will be given
- Between Week 4 of Term 2 and Week 3 of Term 3 a 40% refund of the tuition fee only will be given
- Between Week 4 and Week 10 of Term 3 a 10% refund of the tuition fee only will be given
- Anytime during Term 4, no refund will be given and the full year’s fees will be payable

Refunding Boarding Fees

If a student is leaving St Joseph's School Boarding House part way through the year the following will apply.

If a student leaves the Boarding House during:
- Term 1, 50% of the yearly boarding fee will be refunded
- Term 2, 25% of the yearly boarding fee will be refunded
- Term 3, 10% of the yearly boarding fee will be refunded
- Term 4, no refund will be given and the full year’s boarding fee will be payable
APPROVAL

This Policy was approved by the School Board on: 9th February 2016

Chairperson Signature:

REVIEW DATE

February 2018