



## **SCHOOL FEE POLICY & PROCEDURE**

### **Vision**

Saint David's Parish School is a vibrant, inclusive, Catholic community inspired by St Mary MacKillop fostering faith and learning so as to nurture optimistic, compassionate people of the world.

### **Introduction**

Saint David's Parish School exists to provide education for those children who have been admitted into the school in accordance with the approved enrolment policy.

This policy has been designed to:

- Provide assistance in the establishment, formulation and setting of fees.
- Set a procedure for the issue and collection of school fees.
- Be aware of and consider the ability of parents to meet their responsibilities.
- Consider the particular situation of those parents who are genuinely unable to meet the set fees.
- Provide guidance in the recovery of outstanding fees with particular regard for those parents who are genuinely unable to meet their reasonable obligations.

### **Guiding Principles**

The following principles underpin Saint David's Parish School's Fee Policy. All the principles are to be taken into account in the interpretation and application of the Policy.

#### **Common Good**

The application of fees is to assist families, to access Catholic education in a compassionate and just manner.

#### **Accessibility**

Fees are affordable for families.

#### **Equity**

School fees are set with due regard for the nature and needs of individual students within the school community.

#### **Mutual respect**

The management of fees is based on respectful relationship between parents/guardians and the school.

#### **Shared responsibility**

Parents/guardians and the school share together a responsibility for the education of students in Saint David's Parish School.

#### **Viability**

The management of fees and debt maintains the viability of Saint David's Parish School; therefore, the payment of fees in a timely manner by parents/guardians is essential to the viability of their child's school.

#### **Transparency**

The processes for the management of fees and debt are explicit, clear, and open to scrutiny.

## POLICY STATEMENT

A family's financial circumstances should not be a barrier to a student accessing a Catholic education.

1. The school is responsible for applying the policy's Guiding Principles to set its annual fee schedule considering;
  - The school's delivery of education so that students become thriving people, capable learners, leaders of the world God desires.
  - The circumstances, needs and aspirations of the school community
  - The balance between the school's income and expenditure, including Government funding to the school and the school's operational, infrastructure and capital costs, to ensure its financial sustainability.
  - Fee remission arrangements that address the capacity of the parent/guardian to pay the school's fees.
2. Saint David's Parish School are to publish each year's fee schedule in the preceding calendar year and apply processes that are consistent with the spirit of the policy.
3. Upon a student's enrolment, schools agree to provide the educational services for which parents/guardians accept responsibility for the payment of fees in a timely manner.
4. Schools will work with parents/guardians in a just, respectful, compassionate, transparent and considered manner in the processes of setting and collecting fees.
5. Details of a family's financial circumstances in determining fee remission arrangements will be handled respectfully and with appropriate confidentiality.
6. Where families do have the capacity to pay fees, then it is a matter of fairness that those who can afford to pay do so.
7. If parents/guardians are experiencing genuine financial difficulty it is their responsibility to meet with the Principal/delegate for consideration of alternative financial arrangements. Any such arrangements shall be formally communicated by the school, be subject to periodic review, and may have terms and conditions applied
8. Debt management with regards to outstanding fees should be based on positive and respectful relationships between the school and families.
9. Schools may take appropriate action to ensure a parent's/guardian's fee obligation are met including, but not limited to, restricting a student's participation in major extra-curricular activities where a significant amount of school fees is outstanding.
10. If an outstanding fee account is not resolved following the school's engagement with the parent/guardian, the school may undertake debt collection procedures.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### **School Boards have the responsibility to;**

- 1) Approve the annual budget of the school, including the setting and collection of fees.
- 2) Ensure the school's fee and debtor management procedures and processes are consistent with the SACCS Fee Policy.
- 3) Exercise oversight through its Finance Committee of the fee processes, including processes for the collection of outstanding fees and review of debtors.

### **School Principals have the responsibility to:**

- 1) Ensure the school's fee and debtor management processes are consistent with the Catholic ethos and the Guiding Principles as stated in this policy.
- 2) Manage the school's fee and debtor management processes thoroughly and appropriately.
- 3) Ensure that the school's fee and debtor management processes are in accordance with SACCS Fee Procedures and are exercised in a just and respectful manner.

**Business Managers / Finance Officers have the responsibility to:**

- 1) Ensure the school's fee and debtor management processes are consistent with the Catholic ethos and the Guiding Principles as stated in this policy.
- 2) Ensure that interactions of school personnel with parents/guardians with regards to fees and debt are consistent with the Catholic ethos and the Guiding Principles as stated in this policy.
- 3) Give appropriate advice to the Principal and School Board about matters relating to fee setting, appropriate fee levels for families and fee collection.

**Parents/guardians have the responsibility to:**

- 1) Pay their fees as determined by the school's fee schedule and any arrangements they enter into with the school about the arrangement for their fee payment.
- 2) Be honest in their dealing with the school.
- 3) Respect the circumstances of the parents/guardians in the school community.

## School Fee Processes

### Fee Structure

Saint David's Parish School has adopted a single Fee Structure that is inclusive and transparent.

The school will publish a single Full Fee and a separate single Lower Income Fee that is inclusive of all fees and charges.

Exclusions will be camps, extra-curricular activities, stationery and uniforms. These items will be charged separately.

### School Resource Standard (SRS) Funding Contribution (dependents of Overseas Students ONLY)

The school may accept the enrolment of a child that is a dependent on the Student Visa (subclass 500).

Students who are dependents of Overseas Students do not qualify for Government Funding under SRS. Families will be charged an SRS Funding Contribution Fee in addition to the standard full school fee.

Note, if the child is the main applicant on the Student Visa, the child must attend a CRICOS registered school.

If a family's Visa changes throughout the year, it is the family's responsibility to update the school of the changes.

The SRS Funding contribution is payable at the beginning of the school year. If the family receives a substantive visa by Commonwealth Census date in August and the student becomes eligible for government funding the SRS fee contribution amount will be refunded to the family.

### Discounts and Remissions

The following types of discounts and remissions are adopted by the school.

#### Family Discounts (siblings)

Saint David's Parish School has discounts for siblings. Please refer to the School Fees & Charges Information document for the current year for a breakdown of these discounts.

#### Income Based Remissions (e.g. School Card Scheme)

If a family is assessed as eligible for School Card by the Department of Education, they become eligible to receive the Lower Income Fee.

### Financial Difficulty Remissions

Financial difficulty remissions will be offered to families that can provide supporting evidence of hardship. Typical evidence may include Australian Taxation Office documents and Centrelink documents.

Remissions typically last for a period of one year and are assessed on a case by case basis. These types of discounts are approved by the Principal and arrangements will be made via a Application for Remission of School Fees form that is signed by the parent/guardian and approved by the Principal or delegate.

### Early Payment

Early payment discounts are offered by the school as an incentive for families to pay their school fees upfront by a nominated date/s each year. The discount offered is 5%. For student commencing part way through a year, a separate date will be nominated for this discount.

### Payment Methods and Terms of Payment

Fee accounts will be issued by the end of Week 2, Term 1 or for mid-year intake the end of Week 2, Term 3.

Statements will be issued by end the of Week 2 for each term thereafter.

Acceptable payment terms:

- Upfront payment
- Fortnightly payments over 40 weeks
- Monthly payments over 10 months from February to November
- Quarterly payments once per term by Week 5 of each term

All accounts are required to be finalised by the end of November.

Payment of accounts can be paid by Direct Debit, BPAY, Credit Card, Cash or EFTPOS, Qkr! or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

### Enrolment for Less than a Full Year

Pro-rata fees apply where students are not enrolled for a full year.

### Withdrawal of a Student

One full term's notice of your intention to withdraw a student from the school is required in writing to the Principal. Where this is not adhered to, the school reserves the right to charge a full term's school fees. Extraordinary circumstances will be taken into account.

### Spilt Family Accounts

It is a legal responsibility of each signatory on the enrolment contract to pay all fees and charges owing. Accounts will not be split unless a court order specifies this requirement. Where the school is provided with a court order that provides for alternative fee payment arrangement the school will act in accordance with the court order.

### Absence Due to Holidays

Fees shall not be reduced for a student due to holidays (intrastate, interstate or overseas) during a school term.

## Guiding Principles for Fee Collection Process

### **Inform**

The school will clearly communicate their School Fee Policy with parents/guardians at the time of enrolment.

### **Timeliness**

The school will invoice promptly and communicate statement reminders in a timely manner and at least once a term.

### **Payment Options**

The school will endeavour for all families to be on a scheduled payment plan to ensure regular payments.

### **Continuous Monitoring**

The school will regularly review debtors' balances and due dates.

### **Reminders**

The school will use reasonable means of communication to parents regarding overdue fees include email, letters and phone conversations with Principal or delegate.

### **Documentation**

The school will keep written documentation of all attempts to resolve outstanding fees with families.

### **Escalation**

The school may engage CEO Debt Management to recover outstanding fees. Where this occurs, families may incur additional fees and charges. This process needs approval of the finance committee and the name of the family or name of the individual must not be disclosed to the finance committee or School Board.

### **Supporting Documents**

School Fees & Charges Information

### **Date for Review**

Implemented:	2023
Ratified by School Board:	2023
Next Review:	2026