School Fees, Collection & Payment Policy

Rationale

The Catholic Church's preferential option for the poor obligates Catholic schools to ensure that no baptised student is denied a Catholic education because of an inability to pay.

In recognition of the differential capacity of families to contribute to the costs of education, both the Australian and State governments incorporate a needs-based element into their recurrent funding of the Catholic school system.

The Australian Government uses the Socio Economic Status (SES) index, which is intended to account for the financial position of families, while the State Government includes the SES and each school's Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) enrolment level in its formula. Both formulas are designed to fund the system according to need.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) policy formula for allocating funding to Catholic schools also accounts for need in that, all other factors being equal, lower SES schools receive more funding than higher SES schools. In addition, schools are provided with additional financial assistance for each EMA student.

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) policy on school fees recognises the significant contribution that individual schools make to the costs of education through the generation of private income that includes the payment of fees by families.

Definitions

School fees are what the school charges families for the education of their children.

Private income is that portion of a school's income that is not derived from government recurrent and targeted grants.

Socio-economic status (SES) is a measure of an individual or group's standing in the community and is based on variables including income, occupation, educational attainment and wealth.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is an allowance provided by the State government to assist low-income families to meet the educational needs of their children. The proportion of EMA recipient pupils enrolled at a school is therefore a measure of the schools 'need' or disadvantage.

School levy is a specific purpose school charge that is in addition to the school fees.

Principles

Responsibility Each Catholic school is responsible for setting its own fees.

Policy Development

School communities are required to develop their own school fee policies within the framework of this CEOM policy.

Implementation

- At St Martin de Porres Primary School fees are set in consultation with the Parish Priest, the Accountant / Business Manager and the School Principal, prior to the commencement of the school year
- School Fees incorporate
  1. A **general school fee** paid by families for the education of children. (This is a family fee regardless of the number of children attending the school) and accounts for the bulk of the school fees.
  2. A **school levy** – a specific charge for materials, incursions/excursions and additional programs. (This is an individual payment for each student)
- Invoices are issued at the commencement of the school year listing the General School Fee, the School Levy and Arrears (for any outstanding balances.)
- Statements (outlining payments received) will be forwarded on request
Payments can be made in the following manner

1. Cash/Cheque
2. Direct Debit
3. Credit Card (not EFTPOS) on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly/term basis.

School Fee Variation & Remissions

- All families, as matter of justice to other parents and students at the school, are expected to meet fee commitments in accordance with the above arrangements.
- Families wishing to apply for a variation of these terms are required to contact the principal in order to discuss other arrangements for payment or assistance.
- The process for fee variation is as follows:
  1. Contact with the Principal
  2. Confidential discussion and agreement made
  3. Review of agreement on a 6 month or yearly basis

Recovery of School Fees

- Families who are able but unwilling to pay fees will be sent reminders regarding the importance of honoring the commitments made at enrolment.
- Families that ignore reminders or fail to take measures to address the school’s requests for payment i.e by contacting the school and arranging a payment plan, may have their invoices forwarded to outside agencies to assist the school in recovering monies owed.
- Families that leave the school without completing their school fee payment obligations and do not enter into an arrangement to pay the balance owing, will have their invoices forwarded to an outside agency to assist the school in recovering monies owed.