



# ST ANTHONY'S SCHOOL

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## SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION

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### INTRODUCTION

Collection of school fees is critical if we are to maintain the quality of education we have here at St. Anthony's. Our salaries component of the total school expenditure takes up most of our money. Government funding covers most of our budget with around 20% needed from fees and Parent and Friends Association support. Failure to collect fees means less to be used on resources for our children.

### RATIONALE

Catholic education is to be made available to all Catholic students whose parents seek a Catholic education for them, insofar as this is possible, while embodying the Church's special preference for the poor and disadvantaged. Schools have a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which they operate, to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools. Parents are asked to make a commitment to support Catholic education financially by paying fees.

The Bishops of Western Australia have approved the collection of school fees from parents as a necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

### DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policy School Fees shall be considered to be tuition fees, levies and other charges (eg excursions, camp fees, amenities, book hire etc.).

### PRINCIPLES

1. CECWA shall ensure the financial viability of group funded schools.
2. St. Anthony's fee structure is directly related to the socio-economic status of the school community.
3. The St. Anthony's School Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.
4. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice. The School Board shall actively pursue the collection of school fees where parents have the capacity to pay fees.
5. At St. Anthony's charity requires that requests for fee concessions be treated with dignity, compassion and confidentiality. Each of these requests is directed to the Principal. Where possible a mutually agreed arrangement will be made.
6. The **inability** to pay school fees is not a reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from St. Anthony's School.
7. At St. Anthony's confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and the payment of school fees is paramount. Only the Principal and Bursar/Finance Officer will be aware of the names and details of those experiencing difficulty with fees or who have a special arrangement.

### PROCEDURES

1. Annual fees and charges including maximum increases shall be set by the St. Anthony's School Board in accordance with CECWA advice provided during the budget process each year.
2. In the event that St. Anthony's wishes to exceed the maximum increase in school fees it must first obtain the approval of the Director of Catholic Education.

3. On application at St. Anthony's for enrolment, parents will be provided with the school's fee policy. The School Handbook will be issued to parents upon Acceptance. Our fees and charges are sent home to parents with their accounts annually.
4. At St. Anthony's there is a level of sibling discounts shall be determined by each School Board (applicable to certain fees only). *As a guide the following discount levels are suggested:*  
*1st child - 0%, 2nd child - 20%, 3rd child - 40%, 4th child & beyond - 100%*  
 Kindergarten fees shall be charged as a proportion of the respective first child full time fee. Sibling discounts apply to Kindergarten fees.
5. Payment of school fees can be made by Cash, Cheques or EFTPOS at the school office and payable by the due date. For families wishing to pay by Direct Debit, an authority form can be obtained from the school office, the amount is then calculated by the annual school fee divided by the number of weeks to the 31<sup>st</sup> October of each year. A weekly, fortnightly or monthly amount will be provided. Payments can also be made by BPAY using the families BPAY reference number.
6. At St. Anthony's fee collection takes into account:
  - communication of the policy to parents;  
 The documentation of the policy is made available to all parents when they request to see it. Aspects of the policy are outlined in the Parent Information Handbook.
  - a timeline for the payment of accounts;  
 Fees are sent out to parents as an Annual account. The first instalment will be due in term one and the second instalment in semester two. These dates will be communicated to families via the fortnightly newsletter and are on the annual statement. Reminder statements will be sent out to parents who have not paid their fees in full by the due date.
  - families with a valid Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card can obtain the fee discount by presenting the card to the school office and completing the relevant discount form. The discount will apply from the date the card was presented to the school office and where the card has expired the family is required to present the new card to continue to obtain the discount.
  - a process for negotiating the method of payment and the provision of concessions and remissions if required.  
 Contact is made by the school to the parent to discuss a payment arrangement and a decision will be made based on the family's financial review. (Appendix 1).  
  
 Parents are made aware via the newsletter explaining that any financial issue needs to be discussed with the principal. Once contact has been made by the parent an appointment is scheduled with the Principal. An arrangement is made in order to cater for the financial needs of the parents and the school in accordance with the specified agreed amount based upon the family's financial review. (Appendix 1).
- In the event parents who hold a joint contract with the School separate before the contract has come to an end and outstanding fees are owed, the School will seek settlement of the account from all parties named in the contract evenly (i.e. 50% of the fees from each parent), unless otherwise agreed.
- no child is excluded from any school function due to financial concerns. This is kept confidential at all times.
7. At St. Anthony's when parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee repayment strategy and further action is required:
  - documentation shall be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees;
  - parents are notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor may be engaged to recover outstanding fees;
  - should attempts to recover the outstanding amount be unsuccessful then a summons can be issued by the appropriate school authority and judgement entered against the parents.
9. Our Three Year Old Kindy Programme is reliant entirely on the funding from our parent fees and is not supported by any funding system, therefore no concessions apply.  
 Two accounts will be issued each year, with the first account to be issued at the beginning of term one and semester two account at the beginning of term three. A reminder statement will be sent out to parents who have not paid their fees in full by the due date.
  - In the event parents who hold a joint contract with the School separate before the contract has come to an end and outstanding fees are owed, the School will seek settlement of the account from all parties named in the contract evenly (i.e. 50% of the fees from each parent), unless otherwise agreed.

Where a family has ignored all reasonable attempts to pay their account in full and further action is required:

- documentation shall be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees;
- parents are notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor may be engaged to recover outstanding fees;
- should attempts to recover the outstanding amount be unsuccessful then a summons can be issued by the appropriate school authority and judgement entered against the parents.