



# St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School, Hocking

CECWA: Stewardship 2-C12

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## SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION

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### 1. RATIONALE

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) has a responsibility to make Catholic education available to all Catholic students whose parents seek a Catholic education for them, insofar as this is possible, while embodying the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Mandate page 50). Schools have a responsibility to communicate the financial constraints under which they operate to parents enrolling their children in Catholic schools. Parents are required 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.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

#### 2.1 School Fees:

- for the purpose of this policy statement School Fees will be considered to be tuition fees, levies and other charges (eg excursions, Sacramental program, camp fees, amenities and books).

#### 2.2 Application for Enrolment Fee:

- the fee associated with processing an application for student enrolment into a school.

#### 2.3 Acceptance of Enrolment Fee:

- the fee associated with securing a student's enrolment into a school after an offer of enrolment has been made by the school.

#### 2.4 Role of School Board:

- in Diocesan accountable schools, the School Board has a managerial role with regard to the setting and collection of school fees.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia

### 4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 The collection of school fees will be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.

4.2 Financial grounds will never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School.

4.3 CECWA will ensure the financial viability of group funded schools.

4.4 St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School Board has the responsibility for the financial management of the school and, consequently, is responsible for the collection of school fees.

4.5 St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School will ensure our school fees reflect the socio-economic status of our school community

- 4.6 Families with limited capacity to pay school fees have an entitlement to claim a fee concession. Requests for fee concessions will be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality.
- 4.7 Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions on completion of a simple application form.
- 4.8 The withholding of access to students of normal pastoral and curriculum provision will not be used as a fee collection strategy.
- 4.9 Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees.
- 4.10 Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees will be actively pursued.

**5. PROCEDURES**

- 5.1 St Elizabeth’s Catholic Primary School Board sets annual fees and charges including maximum increases in accordance with CECWA advice provided during the budget process each year. Written approval from the Director of Catholic Education must be sort to exceed the maximum increase in school fees and charges.
- 5.2 We recognise the Church’s preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged. We have implemented CECWA’s decision to give automatic tuition fee discounts for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. The Catholic Education Office will inform schools of the fee level during the budget process each year.
- 5.3 On Application for Enrolment parents are provided with the School Fees Policy - Setting and Collection and the Fee Schedule which identifies the components that make up the overall school fees. At the time of the interview for enrolment this can be discussed further as necessary. Acknowledgment of the Fee Collection procedures on the ‘Application for Enrolment’ form will be signed by parents or guardians. In the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian one signature will suffice.

**FEE SETTING**

- 5.4 Annual fees and charges including maximum increases shall be set by the School Board in accordance with CECWA’s advice provided during the budget process each year.
- 5.5 The Application for Admission fee is \$25.00 and is non-refundable.
- 5.6 The Acceptance of the Enrolment fee is \$200.00 and will be deducted from the tuition fees in the year of enrolment. Where circumstances are beyond the control of the parents in accepting the enrolment not being fulfilled, the Principal shall give consideration to a refund of the Acceptance of Enrolment fee. If you decline our offer after paying your Acceptance Fee we will retain the full amount for our administration costs.
- 5.7 The CECWA decision regarding automatic tuition fee discounts for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards will be implemented. The fee level will be communicated to schools by the Catholic Education Office during the budget process each year.
- 5.8 The level of sibling discount is determined by the St Elizabeth’s Catholic Primary School Board in line with the following guide as set by CECWA:

1 <sup>st</sup> child enrolled	0 %
2 <sup>nd</sup> child enrolled	20 % of that child’s tuition fee
3 <sup>rd</sup> child enrolled	40 % of that child’s tuition fee
4 <sup>th</sup> child enrolled and beyond	100% of that child’s tuition fee

5.9 Sibling discounts apply to kindergarten students. All students and families are eligible for sibling discounts including families who receive automatic tuition fee discounts as holders of eligible means tested family concession cards.

5.10 St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School will ensure that the family discounts are offered for Special Education students whether siblings attend the same Catholic school or a number of Catholic schools.

## **FEE COLLECTION**

5.11 School fees will be issued annually at the commencement of the school year. To assist parents and/or guardians, payment may be made in full within 21 days of receipt of the School Fees or via direct debit over the first three terms, on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. All accounts must be settled by the completion of term three.

5.10 The principal will ensure that, prior to legal action; all reasonable efforts have been made to contact parents and/or guardians in order to resolve fee payment issues. Where parents and/or guardians have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee payment strategy and further action required:

- documentation will be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees
- parents and/or guardians will be notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor will be engaged to recover outstanding fees and any additional costs will be added to the account in accordance with the School Fee Policy
- St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School will engage the service of a debt collection agency or solicitor who undertakes to comply with the ACCC, Trade Practices Act (TPA) and ASIC Debt Collection Guideline: for collectors and creditors
- a General Procedure Claim (summons) can be issued by the appropriate school authority via the debt collection agency engaged and judgement entered against the parent. Before enforcement proceedings are taken, such as a Property Seizure and Sale Order, Earnings Appropriation Order, or any other enforcement action, written approval will be obtained from the Executive Director of Catholic Education

All documentation will be kept in a confidential file regarding each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees.

## **6 REFERENCES**

<sup>1</sup>Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia

## **7 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

ACCC, Trade Practices Act (TPA)

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)

Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) Debt Collection Guideline: for collectors and creditors

## 8 REVIEW HISTORY

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
1994	SRC	Originally Released as 'Collection of School Fees'
1995	SRC	Reviewed
1999	SRC	Reviewed
2006	SRC	Reviewed and Renamed
2009	SRC	Reviewed
2010	CEOWA	Reformatted
2012	SRC	Reviewed

## 9 NEXT REVIEW

Year:	CEOWA Standing Committee Responsibilities
2015	School Resources Committee