



FEE POLICY

Introduction

St Thomas School and Preschool 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 St Thomas School and Preschool'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 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 St Thomas School and Preschool.

Viability

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

Transparency

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



ST THOMAS SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL

FAITH FAMILY FUTURE

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 the Mission of Catholic 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 a parent/guardian to pay the school's fees.
2. St Thomas School and Preschool are to publish each year's fee schedule in the preceding calendar year and apply processes that are consistent with and in the spirit of this policy.
3. Upon a student's enrolment, schools agree to provide educational services for which parents/guardians accept the 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 for 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 in accordance with the school's Privacy Policy.
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 schools and families.
9. Schools may take appropriate action to ensure a parent's/guardian's fee obligations 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 fees 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 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.



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Business Manager / 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 the 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 fees setting, appropriate fee levels for families and fee collection.

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to the rest of the school community to:

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

School Fee Processes

Fee Structure

St Thomas school has 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 and extra-curricular activities. These items will be invoiced separately.

Fee Structure Preschool

St Thomas Preschool has a single inclusive fee per term for enrolment.

Dependents of Overseas Students

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 are not eligible for government funding and the school is obliged to charge a fee to those students in lieu of receiving any government funding.

The Principal may use their discretion as to what fees (both the usual school fees and the SRS funding recurrent government funding that the school will be forgoing for this child) the family is charged, depending on their circumstances.

Note, if the child is the main applicant on the Student Visa, the child must attend a CRISOC registered school. If a family's Visa changes throughout the year, it is the family's responsibility to update the school of the changes.

Discounts and Remissions

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

Family Discounts (siblings)

The eldest child, Child 1 receives no discount

Child 2 receives a 12.5% discount

Child 3 receives a 34% discount

Child 4 and subsequent children receive a 50% discount

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.

Family discounts do not apply to Preschool Fees.



Financial Difficulty Remissions

Families experiencing financial difficulties or hardships 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 Fee Variation 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 the families to pay their school fees upfront by a nominated dates/s each year. The discount offered is 5%. For students commencing part way through a year a separate date will be nominated for this discount.

Early Payment discounts do not apply to Preschool fees.

Payment Methods and Terms of Payment

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

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

Acceptable payment terms;-

- Upfront payment
- Fortnightly payments over 22 fortnights
- Monthly payments over 10 months February to November
- Quarterly payments once per term due by week 5 of each term

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

Preschool Fees are payable by week 5 of each term.

Payment of accounts can be paid by cash, EFTPOS, cheque, direct debit, BPAY, Centrelink.

Enrolment for Less than a Full Year

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

A minimum of one term's notice is required for withdrawal of a student from St Thomas School and Preschool. The equivalent of one term's tuition fee will be charged as a fee in lieu of the appropriate notice.

Split 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 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.



Guiding Principles for Fee Collection Process

Inform

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

Timeliness

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

Payment Options

The will endeavour for all families to be on a schedules 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, including emails, letters, and telephone 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 a debt collection agency 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.

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