ST PIUS X CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL FEE SETTING AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE

RATIONALE

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) has a responsibility to make a Catholic education available to all Catholic students whose parents seek a Catholic education for them, while embodying the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged (Mandate, p 50), insofar as this is possible.

Schools are reminded that it is essential to minimise potential barriers for parents such as fees and other costs (Mandate, p 7), and to keep costs to parents as low as possible (Mandate p, 38). Schools need to avoid material ambitions that might lead to higher fees and force them into giving counter-witness (Mandate, p. 22).

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 as a necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

DEFINITIONS

School Fees:

For the purpose of this policy statement, School Fees include the total cost of educating a child. School Fees include tuition fees, levies (e.g. curriculum levies, or IT levies) and other charges (e.g. book hire, insurance, compulsory excursions, camp fees, amenities, building levies, etc.).

Application Fee:

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

Enrolment Deposit:

School fees paid in advance as a deposit, associated with securing a student enrolment into a school, after an offer of enrolment has been made by the school.

Role of School Advisory Council

At St Pius X School, the School Advisory Council works in collaboration with the Principal to financially manage the school. This includes the setting and collecting of school fee procedures in accordance with the CEWA Executive Directives.

PRINCIPLES

1. St Pius X School shall ensure that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community, in the context of the policy rationale.
2. Financial grounds shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from St Pius X School.
3. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice.
4. Families with limited capacity to pay school fees have an entitlement to claim a fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality.
5. Families with eligible means tested family concession cards have an automatic entitlement to tuition fee concessions.
6. The confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees shall be maintained, as mandated in legislation.
7. Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

PROCEDURES

- At St Pius X School fees and all discounts, including CECWA's Health Care Card Discount Scheme, are announced at the Annual General Meeting in November each year. Following this meeting, the fees and discounts are communicated in the school Newsletter.
- A copy of the School Fee Setting and Collection Procedure is available on the school website.
- A standard schedule of annual fees is posted on the school website in Term 4, each year.
- Charges for incursions/excursion and extra items are also charged annually. Statement of Fees should be paid as follows:

  Four equal instalments (25% of total fees) to be paid by:

  End of February; end of May; end of August; end of October - unless alternative arrangements have been made.
- On application for admission, parents and/or guardians will be advised that a copy of the school's 'Fee Setting and Collection Procedure' is available on the school website. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with this. By signing the Application for Enrolment parents acknowledge that they accept the St Pius X School Fees Setting and Collection Procedure. The application form should be signed by both parents but in the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian, one signature will suffice.

FEE SETTING

1. CECWA will determine the maximum total School Fee increase and communicate this to each school on an annual basis.
2. Increases to total School Fees shall not exceed the maximum increase set by CECWA.
3. Schools wishing to exceed the maximum increase in School Fees must obtain the prior written approval of the Executive Director of Catholic Education.
4. Application fees shall not exceed the greater of $55.00 or 1% of the school annual tuition fee. Application fees are non-refundable. **The Application for Enrolment fee at St Pius X School is $50 per family.**
5. Enrolment deposits shall not exceed 25% of the annual tuition fee and shall be credited to the parent's account in the first semester of the year of enrolment. Enrolment deposits for students who do not commence at the school are non-refundable. The **Acceptance of Enrolment fee at St Pius X School is $150.**
6. Kindergarten tuition fees shall be charged as a proportion of the respective Year 1 tuition fee. The specific proportion shall be equal to the FTE of the Kindergarten program that the school runs.
7. Annual School Fees must be endorsed by the School Advisory Council during the budget process annually.

FEE DISCOUNTS PROCESS

Fee Discounts

1. The following School Fee discounts and concessions may be offered by Catholic schools:
    - Family discount for siblings;
    - Multiple school family discount for siblings;
    - Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount;
    - Special concessions and other discounts.
2. The Principal may request financial information from parents to support applications for fee concessions or any other concessions.
3. Families with limited capacity to pay fees have the ability to request a fee concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness and compassion.

Family discount for siblings

1. Families with siblings enrolled in Kindergarten through to Year 12 in the same Catholic school are entitled to a family discount as determined by the principal.
2. CECWA recommends the following family discounts:

2nd Child enrolled	20% of that child's tuition fees
3rd child enrolled	40% of that child's tuition fees
4th child enrolled and beyond	100% of that child's tuition fees

3. Parents who receive the Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount are eligible for family discounts for siblings.

Multiple school family discount for siblings

1. Consideration should be given to family fee discounts in situations where families have children enrolled in more than one Catholic school.

Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount

1. The Health Care Card Discount Scheme provides an automatic fee concession for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. This discount applies across all year levels, from Kindergarten to Year 12.
2. The total discounted school fees for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards are set as follows:

Kindergarten	$300 per student
Primary (PP-year 6) Secondary (Year 7-12)	$300 per student $1500 per student

3. These school fees shall be annually reviewed by the CECWA, based on changes to the eligibility income thresholds, and shall be communicated to schools during the budget process each year.
4. Family building levies shall be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee for the eldest sibling as follows:

Kindergarten	30% of the HCC fee	$90 per family
Primary (PP-Year 6)	30% of the HCC fee	$90 per family
Secondary (Year 7-12)	20% of the HCC fee	$300 per family

5. Principals may add additional charges for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. These may be levied on a user-pays basis and could include charges associated with VET courses, camps, music lessons and other activities where there are direct and additional costs associated with such activities.
6. Principals are encouraged to keep these costs to a minimum and assist those families who encounter difficulties in meeting these additional charges.
7. Full details of the Health Care Card Discount Scheme are available for schools in the *Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount Scheme - Supporting Guidelines*.

Special concessions and other discounts

1. The Principal may receive requests for special fee concessions and discounts from parents due to a variety of circumstances.
2. The Principal may determine an appropriate fee concession after considering the parent's financial capacity to pay, the school's financial position and the approved budget for special fee concessions.

FEE COLLECTION PROCESS

Fee collection

1. Schools must facilitate multiple ways and frequencies for parents to pay e.g. debit card, credit card, direct debit or bank transfer; and weekly, monthly, per term or yearly. **At St Pius X School you can pay Fees via BPAY, cash, debit or credit cards, direct debit or bank transfer. Parents can contact the school to set up frequency of payments of fees.**
2. The recovery of overdue fees must be approached pastorally and sensitively, particularly if this involves legal action.
3. Principals will keep comprehensive documentation of each attempt to resolve the problems of overdue fees.
4. The following actions should be taken when collecting overdue fees:

1. A written communication must be sent to the parents, bringing to their attention the overdue balance.
2. Should there be no response within 14 days, the school should contact the parent/s by phone to discuss the overdue fees and payment options.
3. If an arrangement to discuss the overdue fees cannot be made, or no action results after another 14 days, a formal registered letter from the Principal should be sent to remind parents of their financial obligations. This letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the school and a specified timeframe for a response.
4. Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter (*Letter 1: Fee Obligations)*, the Principal must send a formal registered letter with a final notice. The letter should seek payment and outline the possible outcomes if payment is not received within the specified timeframe. This could include legal action. Refer to *Letter 2: Final Fee Notice* in the *Supporting Guidelines* document.
5. Should there be no response or action within 14 days of the letter (*Letter 2: Final Fee Notice)*, the Principal may engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover overdue fees and any additional costs.
6. If the debt collection agent is not successful in contacting the parents or in establishing a debt repayment plan, the Principal may consider initiating court proceedings through a General Procedure Claim to obtain judgement.
7. Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, the Principal must obtain written approval from the Executive Director of CEWA. Refer to Enforcing a Judgement.
8. Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in a school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS:

The Principal must be given a full term's notice, in writing, prior to the student's withdrawal. Without such notice, the school reserves the right to charge a term's fees in lieu of notice.

REFERENCES Bishops of Western Australia 2009, *Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015*.

CECWA Executive Directive – School Fees

CECWA Executive Directive – Debt and Cash Management