



FEE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

St Francis is a co-educational Catholic Primary School serving the educational needs of students from Reception to Year 6 in the western region of Adelaide. In order to meet its requirements the school charges fees and the following policy provides the guidelines for the setting, collection and remission of these fees. As with all Catholic Schools, St Francis receives Australian and State Government funding. However, the school is dependent upon income from school fees for the provision of educational facilities and resources, payment of day-to-day operational works and capital works, in order to provide a contemporary 21st Century education for our students.

AIM

St Francis will set fees at a level to maintain quality education for the students whilst having consideration for the financial capacity of the community we serve. The School Board will ensure that the financial responsibilities of all families are met as to their agreed obligations by having a systematic and identifiable procedure for the imposition and collection of fees thus ensuring the financial well-being of the school. It is the responsibility of the School Board to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to enable the collection of school fees. Parents/ Caregivers make a commitment to pay school fees when they sign the Enrolment form, prior to their child commencing at St Francis School.

The Finance Subcommittee of the School Board oversees the collection of fees and will review outstanding fees on an ongoing basis. This committee reports to the Board the status of fee collection. All family details remain confidential at all times.

It is the policy of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools that no child be denied a Catholic Education because of a parent's demonstrated inability to pay fees subject to the school's enrolment policy and that of SACCS. Nevertheless those who are able to pay should be required to do so.

Families who qualify for support under the S.A. Government School Card Scheme must not be required to pay full fees. However, in most instances such families are expected to make some fee contribution.

School fees and charges are set in light of the school's Five Year Plan which has been prepared in consultation with the Finance Team of the Catholic Education Office. The level of the school's SES (a socio-economic indicator) and the Annual Guidelines set by the CEO guide decisions about fees and charges.

St Francis School is using an income approach for fee setting, which focuses on the family's financial capacity, where the underlying premise is that all families pay full fees that are determined by family income levels.

Tier 3 Full Fees Combined Income over \$63,000

Tier 2 School Card Limit Less than \$63,000

Tier 1 School Card if Eligible

Please note that everyone is treated equally in that all families can choose to pay fees at the top tier level by not producing documentation, or can choose to pay fees at their appropriate family income level by producing the appropriate documentation. In order to qualify for a level other than the 3rd tier, a family may simply provide a

copy of the letter from Centrelink confirming their income and level of benefit, or alternatively, families can provide copies of their taxation return advice, from the ATO, for their latest income tax return completed.

FEE STRUCTURE

St Francis School will set an annual fee each year. The fee does not cover the cost of consumable books, electives such as soccer, netball, tennis etc. Camps are also additional costs for students from Year 4 to Year 6

Tuition Fee: Tuition fees are payable to support the operational costs of the school not met by the Australian and State Government funding received by the school.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

St Francis School Finance Committee will determine fees each year after considering the following points

- referring to the recommendations of the Catholic Education Office for the setting of fees
- analyzing Catholic schools fees near by
- taking into account the needs of the Five Year Financial Plan.
- determining the needs of the school in the upcoming year.

A recommendation will be made to the School Board in November who will ratify the fees.

Information about the fees will be made to the community as soon as possible after the November Board Meeting.

FAMILY DISCOUNTS

Tuition fee reduction is available to families with two or more children attending the St Francis School on the following basis:

- 2 children – 12% of each fee
- 3 children – 18% of each fee
- 4 children – The 4th and subsequent children free

SCHOOL CARD

The State Government offers assistance for families via the School Card Assistance Scheme. Families on low incomes and are encouraged to apply for government assistance under the School Card Scheme. It is important that parents/ caregivers work with the school to complete the necessary documentation, as there are administrative cut-off dates determined by Government authorities. School Card needs to be applied for each year.

Families eligible and approved for School Card will automatically receive a 40% reduction in their tuition fees.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

As St Francis School is using the income approach for the fees charged to families, any family remissions that may have been issued if a standard amount was chargeable, irrespective of the family income, has been incorporated in each income tier. However if families are suffering financial hardship, they are encouraged to apply in writing for assistance for a warranted reduction in tuition fees. Any applications for tuition fee assistance are treated as confidential. Non-payment of reduced tuition fees is treated as an overdue account.

Any reduction in tuition fees will be considered in terms of the financial needs of the family and of the School Board's responsibility to families who are making the effort to pay regular fees. Families are granted a reduction of tuition fees for the current year only, after which time they would need to reapply in future years if their financial circumstances have not improved. Likewise, it will be seen as the family's responsibility to make good all or part of any reductions if their financial position improves markedly.

Families are encouraged to:

1. Make an appointment and meet with the Principal or Bursar if they have difficulty in paying fees so that the necessary steps for fee reduction application can be discussed.
2. Apply to the School Bursar to pay by instalments if this payment is easier. Payment by instalment can include direct debit or Centrelink deductions and payment schedules can be arranged.

PAYMENT OF FEES

St Francis School supports the concept of equitable financial responsibility on all members of its community and part payments of fees by the due date or by way of regular payments is part of the process.

To achieve this goal, the school encourages regular communication between all parties in relation to the payment of fees.

Accounts can be paid by cash, EFTPOS, direct debit, credit card and Qkr App. The current authority forms for direct debit and payment by credit card can be obtained by contacting the Bursar. It is preferable for all fees to be paid in full when they are due. However, families are encouraged to make regular payment of accounts through direct debits to assist them in meeting their commitments. Fees may be paid either:

- Weekly over 40 school weeks
- Fortnightly over 40 school weeks
- Monthly or by Term.

FEE COLLECTION TIMELINES

Tuition Fees - invoices & statements of account:

School fees are billed over 4 terms. - The Invoice for tuition fees will be raised and a statement mailed home to families in **Week 1** of each term.

School fees are due and payable on Monday of **Week 4** each term.

Reminders will be sent if payment is not received by the due date. You will have **5 days** to respond to the reminder. If your payment is still outstanding, a letter will be sent after **5 days a late fee of \$35.00** will be applied to your account, if no contact has been made to make a payment arrangement.

Such action may include referral to a debt collection agency. Arrangements for payment of tuition fees by families who leave the school community during the school year must be discussed with the Principal with the understanding that for fee reimbursement, notice of one term is required.

DEBT COLLECTION AGENCY

Where fees remain outstanding by the end of Week 9 of each term, with no agreed arrangement for payment, the account may be passed to the school's debt collection agency, who may if directed:

- refer to solicitors.
- take Court action to recover the fees, where deemed appropriate.

Parents are advised that any costs incurred in the use of the debt collection agency will be billed to their account.

Once the collection agency has been engaged, parents are required to work through the agency for settlement of their account

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