St Augustine Primary School
Rivervale

SCHOOL FEES: SETTING AND COLLECTION POLICY

1. 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.

St Augustine Primary School policy for the setting and collection of school fees sets to minimise potential barriers for parents such a s fees and other costs (Mandate, p 7) and to keep costs as low as possible (Mandate p 38).

This policy is communicated to families via the school website, the school app, in the 'forms' package distributed to all families at the beginning of the school year and in the enrolment package for families seeking enrolment for their child.

2. Definitions

School Fees:

- For the purpose of this policy statement, School Fees shall include the total cost of educating a child and compromises: 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 the School Board:

- The School Board is responsible for the financial management of the school, including the setting and colleting of school fees in accordance with the policies and guidelines of the CECWA.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all children enrolled at St Augustine Primary School, Kindergarten to Year Six.

4. Principles

4.1 St Augustine Primary School Board ensures that school fees reflect the socio-economic status of the school community, in the context of the policy rationale.

4.2 Financial grounds shall never been the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child form St Augustine Primary School .

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

4.4 Students will not be denied access to the normal pastoral and curriculum provision as a fee collection strategy.

4.5 Families with limited capacity to pay school fees are entitled to claim a school fee concession. Requests for fee concessions will be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality.

4.6 Families with eligible means tested family concession cards (Health Care Card) or Pensioner Concession Card) have an automatic entitlement to school fee concessions.

4.7 The confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and/or guardians and the payment of school fees shall be maintained, as mandated in legislation.

4.8 Where parents and/or guardians have the capacity to pay fees, the collection of school fees shall be actively pursued.

5. Procedures

5.1 The School Fee Schedule at St Augustine Primary School is announced to the school community at the School Board Annual General Meeting (usually held in November). Thereafter, fees, all discounts and advertised on the school website, the school app, the beginning of the year 'forms' package and the enrolment package.

5.2 St Augustine Primary School Board School Fee Schedule. Appendix1.

5.3 St Augustine Primary School Board provides families with options for payment of school fees, this is communicated in the School Fee Schedule Letter to Parents. Appendix 2.

5.4 St Augustine Primary School Board annually reflects on the fee policy, making any changes to reflect:

Any changes to the CECWA *School Fees: Setting and Collection Policy*
Any legislative changes
Any community socio-economic considerations

5.5 The Principal may from time to time, request financial information from families to support the application for fee discount.

5.6 Families that are holders of an eligible means-tested family concession card are simply required to provide evidence that their card is valid for the duration of the academic year.

5.7 On allocation for admission at St Augustine Primary School, parents and/or guardians are provided with the School Fee Setting and Collection Policy.

5.8 Parents and/or guardians acknowledge the fee collection on the *Application for Enrolment Form* which is to be signed by both parents and/or guardians. In the case of a sole custodial parent or guardian, one signature will suffice.

Fees Prior to Enrolment

5.9 Application fees at St Augustine Primary School shall not exceed $40.00. Application fees are non-refundable.

5.10 The Enrolment Deposit at St Augustine Primary School is $100 and is deducted from the annual school tuition fee. Where circumstances beyond the control of parents result in an enrolment deposit not being paid, waiving the cost is considered by the Principal.

Fee Setting

5.11 Annual school fees are set by the School Board during the budget process each year. Increases to total school fees shall be in accordance with the maximum increase parameters annually set by the CECWA.

5.12 The School Board will seek approval of the Executive Director of Catholic Education in the event that the need to increase school fees exceeds that set in 5.11.

Fee Discounts

5.13 Families with limited capacity to pay school fees have an entitlement to claim a fees concession. Requests for fee concessions shall be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and confidentiality.

5.14 The CECWA introduced Health Care Card Discount Scheme in 2005 to provide an automatic fee concession for the holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. This discount will be implemented across all year levels, Kindergarten to Year Six.

The total discounted school fees for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards are set as follows:

Kindergarten to Year 6	$300 per student

These school fees shall be annually reviewed by the CECWA, based on changes to the eligibility income thresholds, and shall be communicated to schools by the CECWA office during the budget process each year.

The family building levy will be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee.

Kindergarten to Year 6	30% of HCC fee	$90 per family

St Augustine Primary School may, at times, add certain specific charges for holders of eligible means-tested family concession cards. These may be levied on a user-pays basis, e.g. charges associated with camps etc.

St Augustine Primary School will endeavour to keep these costs to a minimum, within the spirit and intent of this policy, and to assist those families who encounter difficulties in meeting these additional charges.

Discount for families

5.15 Families with siblings enrolled in Kindergarten to Year Six in the same Catholic school are entitled to a level of family discount that shall be determined be the School Board. The recommended CECWA family discounts are:

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

5.16 Kindergarten fees will be charged as a proportion of the respective Year 1 fee. The specific proportion shall be equal to the FTE of the Kindergarten program.

5.17 All students and families are eligible for family discounts, including families who receive automatic tuition fee discounts as holders of eligible means tested family concession cards.

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

5.19 Consideration will be given to family fee discounts in situations where families have children enrolled in more than one Catholic school. Although the provision of such discounts is not mandatory, schools are strongly encouraged to recognise families supports of the System by providing additional discounts in these circumstances.

Fee collection

5.20 St Augustine Primary School Board has developed strategies for fee collection that are consistent with the principles of this policy.

- Fees and their payment are discussed in conjunction with this policy, with parents at the time of enrolment.
- Families are provided with multiple ways and frequencies to pay school fees e.g. debit card, credit card, direct debit, or bank transfer (this information is available in Appendix 2)
- Fees for the following year are communicated to the community in advance and are published via the school website, school app and school newsletter
- A full statement of fees payable for the year is provided to families no later than week two of term one. Periodic statements are provided in the first week of terms two and three. Final reminder notices are provided in the first week of term four.

5.21 Parents who are able but unwilling to pay fees can be problematic. Every effort is made to help parents understand their obligations as a matter of justice to the whole community. The recovery of unpaid fees, particularly of this involves legal action, will be approached humanely and sensitively to protect the child as much as possible from the public embarrassment that could arise.

5.22 The steps take in relation to the collection of unpaid fees are as follows:

1. A written communication shall be sent to the parents and/or guardians, bringing promptly to their attention the outstanding balance.
2. Should there be no response within 14 days, an appropriate person shall approach the parents on a person al basis, in a sensitive, discreet, and confidential manner.

3. If the personal approach cannot be made, or no action results from it within another 14 days, a formal registered letter for the Principal will be used to remind the parents and/or guardians of their financial obligations. This letter will an invitation to discuss the matter with the school and a specified timeframe for a response.

4. Ought there to be no response or action within 14 days of the letter, the school Principal will send a formal registered letter with a final notice, seeking payment and outlining the possible outcomes, including legal action, which could occur if payment is not received within the specified timeframe.

5. If, despite this last letter, there is no response or action the School Board may approve to engage the services of a debt collection agency or a solicitor to recover the outstanding fees and any additional costs.

6. In the event that debt collection is not successful in contacting parents and/or guardians or in establishing a debt repayment plan, the school may consider initiating court proceedings. Before this is done, the school will inform in writing the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

7. Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, the school will obtain written approval from the Executive Director of Catholic Education.

8. The school will keep comprehensive documentation of each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees.

9. Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in the school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents and/or guardian have not paid fees.

6. References

Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009-2015

CECWA *School Excursions policy*

Catholic School Board Constitution, Western Australia

Privacy Act 1998

Supporting Guidelines for Schools, CECWA *School Fees: Setting and Collection Policy*

7. Related Documents

Nil

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8. Review History

1994 Originally Released
1995, 1999, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2017

9. Next Review

2022