



St Joseph's School Tranmere School Fee Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Making Catholic Education More Affordable initiative is to provide a high-quality Catholic education in every diocesan school that is accessible and affordable for all families.

The Policy for School Fees is framed within this Vision Statement for South Australian Catholic Schools. Our policy recognises that Catholic school communities develop the whole person, encourage the pursuit of excellence and celebrate the human and divine gifts of each student. Our policy is intended to support families in the school with fees and provide the school with fee income.

2. Background: St. Joseph's School Tranmere exists to provide education in a Catholic culture where the meaning and message of Jesus Christ is available to students. This message permeates all dimensions of school life, is based on the gospel values, of justice, compassion, love and reconciliation. School fees support the mission of the school.

3. Definition: School fees are those monies collected from parents/carers and directed towards the recurrent operating and maintenance costs of the school and capital costs in relation to Capital Building Loans.

4. Principles: The following principles underpin St. Joseph's School Tranmere Fee Policy:

1. The School Board is conscious of the sacrifices parents/carers make to enrol children in Catholic Schools and appreciates the difficulties experienced by both fee-paying parents and schools managing increasing costs.
2. The education of children is a joint responsibility and partnership with home and school.
3. The St Joseph's School Tranmere School Board recognises that the school community is comprised of people with varying income levels.
4. Equity and justice are the foundations and the framework of the School Fee Policy. Families have equal opportunities for fee support. All those who access Catholic education are expected to support fee payments.
5. Every person is treated with respect and dignity.
6. Parents are the first educators of their children and are partners in all facets of school life.
7. Catholic tradition and values emphasise the need for each person to have a sense of belonging to a community.

5. Policy

1. No child is to be denied a Catholic education as a result of a parent's/carer's inability to pay school fees. There is a difference in inability to pay as opposed to choosing not to pay;
2. All families, by signing the Acceptance of Place offer, acknowledge they are responsible for payment of fees and charges in order to contribute to the financial viability of the school;
3. A parent receiving School Card will receive 40% low income discount on school fees. Should families of School Card students feel that circumstances make them unable to pay the discounted amount they can then make application for a further Special Discount. Factors considered when reviewing applications are:
 - a. Eligibility for School Card
 - b. Total family income
 - c. Housing costs
 - d. Fees for siblings at other schools
 - e. Number of children in the family
 - f. Illness or special circumstances;
4. A family is able to access one form of school fee remission per year (i.e. families receiving a 40% low income discount cannot also access a 5% early payment discount);
5. A parent/carer who is ineligible to receive School Card is able to apply for the low income school fee rate. Evidence to support the application may be requested.
6. School Fees will be reviewed yearly as determined by the SACCS Financial Guidelines each year;
7. Parents seeking enrolment for their children will be fully informed of the school's expectation regarding the payment of School Fees;
8. Parents accepting enrolment for their children will pay an enrolment fee to secure their school place, credited towards the first year's school fees;
9. Parents must give one terms notice if they intend withdrawing their child from the School. Otherwise one term's fees in lieu of notice will be charged. This fee will only be refunded if children are unable to return to the school due to the family moving out of the area or at the Principal's discretion;
10. Fees not paid by the due date will be followed up with standard procedures if no contact has been made by families to make alternative arrangements.

6. Key Policy Outcomes

- 1 The Principal will sensitively assess the ability to pay fees, so that no family suffers undue hardship.
- 2 The Principal and Business Manager, mindful that financial hardship can occur through unforeseen circumstances, will encourage early negotiation to avoid misunderstanding and hardship in the collection of school fees. If a family experiences unexpected changes in circumstances during the year which results in financial hardship, an application for a fee concession can be made at any time.
- 3 The Board has an expectation, however, that as a matter of simple justice to families who honour their commitment to the payment of school fees, that those who can pay, do so. It reserves the right to take any appropriate actions necessary to recover outstanding or overdue tuition fees.
- 4 The collection of fees is open to negotiation with families with regard to payments made.
- 5 Should families of School Card students feel that circumstances make them unable to pay the low income school fee, they can then make application for a further discount.
- 6 All school fees are to be collected promptly to facilitate a balanced budget
- 7 The Finance Committee will meet prior to each Board Meeting to discuss and assess School Fee matters.
- 8 The School Board Finance Committee will assess applications for reduced fees.
- 9 Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

7. The process for the collection of School Fees will be

- 1 At the beginning of Semester 1 a single family account annual invoice and payment schedule will be sent home from the school via the eldest child in the family.
- 2 It is expected that total fees will be paid by the due date of 14 days (unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the school).
- 3 It is expected that all families will honour their commitment to the payment of fees within the time frame and all payments of fees and charges should be finalised by the end of October each year.
- 4 Reminder notices are placed in the newsletter.
- 5 Outstanding accounts are followed up by Principal and/or Business Manager via email, individual letters and/or telephone calls.
- 6 Negotiated payments, fortnightly, monthly, must be maintained regularly and punctually.
- 7 Direct debit from nominated bank accounts/credit card is encouraged for instalment payments.
- 8 Bank charges incurred through the "re-presentation" of cheques will be debited to the family fee account.
- 9 Where the payment of school fees is not made after reasonable attempts of collection, the recovery of fees will be placed in the hands of a debt collector and action pursued to its finality.
- 10 Additional fees charged by our Debt Collection Agency will be invoiced to the family concerned.
- 11 The Debt Collection Agency may also be employed by the School to recover bad debts from families who have left the school and have the capacity to pay.
- 12 Records will be kept regarding fee collection, fee remission and payment by instalment agreement, as well as documentation regarding overdue school fee accounts and any action taken by the Finance Committee.
- 13 Confidential arrangements are restricted to the Principal and/or Business Manager.
- 14 Students who commence in Terms 2, 3 or 4, or leave at the end of Term 1, 2 or 3 will be charged a pro rata amount for school fees.
- 15 No remissions are granted to families who take their children out of school for extended holidays.

8. Fee Payments

Available systems will be: Direct Debit from Savings Account; Direct Debit from Credit Card; Visa, Mastercard; BPay; Cheque; Cash; payments via Centrelink.

9. Process for Overdue Fees

1. Reminder in the Newsletter with individual emails, letters, phone calls as necessary.
2. Personal letter sent to account holder
3. Referral to Debt Collection Agency with details of outstanding debt

10. Out of School Hours Care Fees (OSHC)

Accounts will be forwarded to parents on a weekly basis and payment is required within seven (7) days. All outstanding accounts will be followed up as per the process in Section 9 above.

**Endorsed by the St Joseph's School Board, February 2024
Review in February 2025**