


St Mary's Primary School	System Update: 03. 06. 2019	
Version 0.1	Date of Next Review: 01. 06. 2021	

# Standard Collection Policy

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## Purpose

The purpose of these procedures is to provide schools with support for the development of strategies related to the payment of fees and the collection of unpaid fees that are consistent, fair and equitable.


The steps to be taken in relation to the payment of fees are as follows:

1. Fees and their payment should be discussed with parents at the time of enrolment. Relevant fee policies and guidelines should be made available at that time.
2. Schools should make provision for parents to pay in a number of ways e.g. direct debit, weekly, monthly, per term or yearly. A full statement of fees payable for the year should be provided to each parent at the start of the school year and periodic statements (e.g. per term) should follow.

The case of parents who are able but unwilling to pay fees, can be problematic for schools. Such cases are likely to surface only after the child has commenced in the school and parents refuse to meet their financial commitments. Every effort must be made to help those parents understand their obligations. It becomes a matter of justice to other parents and students at the school that they should meet their commitments. The recovery of unpaid fees, particularly if this involves legal action, must be approached humanely and sensitively to protect the child as much as possible from the public embarrassment that could arise. In addition, all approaches to parents should be based on appropriate pastoral procedures.


The judgment as to whether parents are unable to pay because of their financial situation must err on the side of leniency, lest the Church be seen by the parents concerned, to be unsympathetic to their situation.

The damage that might be done to the Church's image by the refusal of access or a possible expulsion of a student is a further consideration. Further, it is likely that harm will be done to the relationship between parents and the Church if schools pursue the matter of fee recovery in these public ways and this is to be avoided.

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The steps to be taken in relation to the collection of unpaid fees are as follows:

1. For those who fail to keep up with their commitments it is essential the matter be brought to their attention promptly and responses sought.
2. Follow-up on a personal basis should follow no response. This follow-up should be conducted by an appropriate person(s) in a sensitive, discreet and confidential matter.
3. If this fails, a formal letter from the school should be used to remind parents of their obligation. This letter should include an invitation to discuss the matter with the school and a specified timeframe for a response. Refer to [Sample Letter 1](#): Fee Obligations below.
4. If this course of action is not successful, the school authority may decide to send a letter seeking payment and outlining the possible actions, including legal action, that could occur if payment is not received within the specified timeframe. Refer to [Sample Letter 2](#): Fee Obligations below.
5. As a further step, the school may use the services of a debt collector or issue a letter through a solicitor. In pursuing this course of action, schools should be mindful of the expectations of their relevant diocese with respect to any relevant procedures, including the need to advise the Diocesan Director of their intentions.
6. As a final step, court proceedings may be initiated but prior approval of the Director of Catholic Education must be gained (for Congregational Owned Schools the Congregational Leader). Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in a school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.

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# Sample Letter 1: Fee Obligations

Dear

Our records show that your son's/daughter's/children's fees are currently overdue and that the amount of \$X is outstanding.


If our information is correct, it would be greatly appreciated if you could attend to this matter by settling the account as soon as possible. Should your family be experiencing financial difficulties, please make an appointment with \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss the situation.

A copy of the account is attached for your information and record.

It would be appreciated if we could receive your response within 14 days of the date of this letter.

If you have paid the account within the last few days, please disregard this letter.

Yours sincerely

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## Sample Letter 2: Fee Obligations

Dear

We refer to our earlier correspondence dated \_\_\_\_\_ regarding your account for school fees and note we have failed to receive your response. We advise that the account is well overdue and your early attention to this matter is required.

Fee concessions may be granted in cases of financial hardship or where other special circumstances exist. If this is the case, please contact me/the Principal to arrange an interview to discuss this matter.

It would be appreciated if you could attend to this matter by \_\_\_\_\_, following which the School may refer this matter to solicitors/debt collectors.

If you have paid the account within the last few days, please disregard this letter.

Yours sincerely,