



St Denis Fee Setting, Communication and Collection Guidelines

1. Purpose

This guideline provides guidance for the execution of the CECWA School Fees Executive Directive and School Fees Directives.

Sources of Authority	
CECWA Policy	School Fees Directives
Executive Directive	School Fees Executive Directive

2. Scope

This guideline applies to the Principal, St Denis School, in the setting, communication and collection of school fees.

3. Guidelines

School Fees

Fee Communication Process

Fee Communication must be consistent with CECWA School Fees Directives.

1. School fees must be announced to the school community before the end of the previous school year.
2. Fees and all discounts, including CECWA's Health Care Card Discount Scheme, must be clearly advertised and easily accessible. This includes fee brochures, school websites and newsletters.
3. The principal must update the school community with any changes to school fees to reflect:
 - a. any changes arising from changes to the CECWA Directive;
 - b. any legislative changes, and;
 - c. any community socio-economic considerations
4. On the application for admission, parents and/or guardians will be provided with the school's fee schedule.
5. Acknowledgment of the fee collection procedures shall be on the application for Enrolment form which shall be signed by the parents. In the case of a sole custodial parent, one signature will suffice.
6. The following information must be available to parents relating to the school's fee procedures:
 - a. a recognition of the Church's preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged;

- b. details of school fees as well as information relating to the discounts and fee concessions defined in this Directive;
 - c. a timeline for the payment of accounts;
 - d. a process for negotiating the method of payment and the provision of other special concessions;
 - e. debt collection procedures following non-payment, up to and including decision;
 - f. information regarding access to government assistance.
7. A full statement of fees payable for the year must be provided to each parent at the start of the school year and periodic statements should follow on request.

Fee Setting Process

Fee Setting must be consistent with CECWA School Fees Directives.

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 unless the school has obtained the prior written approval of the Executive Director of Catholic Education.
3. Application fees shall not exceed the greater of \$55.00 or 1% of the school annual tuition fee. Application fees are non-refundable.
4. Enrolment deposits shall not exceed 25% of the annual tuition fee and shall be refunded off the parent's account in the first semester of the year of enrolment.
5. Enrolment deposits for students who do not commence at the school are generally not refundable but can be refunded at the discretion of the principal.
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 are offered:
 - a. Family discount for siblings;
 - b. Health Care Card Tuition Fee discount;
 - c. Special concessions and other discounts.
2. The Principal may, from time to time, 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

Families with siblings enrolled in Kindergarten through to Year 6 in the same Catholic school are entitled to a family discount as follows:

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

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 6.
2. Discounts are provided for tuition fees (billed per student) and building levies (billed per family).
3. Families with two or more children enrolled in the same Catholic school are eligible for further fee discounts as laid out in the "Family discounts for siblings" section above
4. The total discounted school fees for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards are set as \$300 per student.
5. 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.
6. Family building levies shall be charged at the corresponding percentage of the Health Care Card school fee for the eldest sibling as follows:
 - a. Kindergarten 30% of the HCC fee being \$90 per family
 - b. Primary (PP-Year 6) 30% of the HCC fee being \$90 per family
7. Principals may add additional charges for holders of eligible means tested family concession cards. These may be levied on a user-pays basis for other activities where there are direct and additional costs associated with such activities.
8. Principals are encouraged to keep these costs to a minimum and assist those families who encounter difficulties in meeting these additional charges.
9. Full details of the Health Care Card Discount Scheme are available for schools in the *Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount - 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. Under no circumstances can a child enrolled in a school be refused on-going enrolment because their parents have not paid fees.
2. Principals must ensure school's fee procedures for fee collection are consistent with the process within the CECWA School Fees Directives.

3. 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.
4. The recovery of overdue fees must be approached pastorally and sensitively, particularly if this involves legal action.
5. Principals must keep comprehensive documentation of each attempt to resolve the problems of overdue fees.
6. The following actions should be taken when collecting overdue fees:
 - a. A written communication must be sent to the parents, bringing to their attention the overdue balance.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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. Refer to *Letter 1: Fee Obligations* in the *Appendix 1* document.
 - d. 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 *Appendix 2* document.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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. Refer to *How to Commence a General Procedure Claim* on the QCE Policy Hub: *School Fees Directives CECWA Policy*. Before this is done, the Principal shall inform in writing the Executive Director of CEWA.
 - g. Before any enforcement proceedings are taken, the Principal must obtain written approval from the Executive Director of CEWA. Refer to *Enforcing a Judgement* on the QCE Policy Hub: *School Fees Directives CECWA Policy*.

Appendix 1 - Letter 1, Fee Obligations

LETTER 1: *Fee Obligations*

TO BE SENT BY REGISTERED POST

Dear Parent/s (insert name/s here)

Following our letter dated _____ regarding your account for school fees, our records show that your son's/daughter's/children's fees are currently overdue and that the amount of \$_____ 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.

I would like to remind you of your commitment to support Catholic education financially by paying fees when you enrolled your son/daughter/children. This is a necessary contribution to cover the costs of delivering their education.

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,

The Principal

LETTER 2: *Final Fee Notice*

TO BE SENT BY REGISTERED POST

Dear Caregiver/s (insert name/s here)

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 immediate 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 to arrange an interview to discuss this matter.

It would be appreciated if you could attend to this matter by _____ (*14 days of the date of the letter*), 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,

The Principal