

School Fees Policy

Rationale

Sacred Heart College Kyneton is owned and administered by the Sisters of Mercy through Mercy Education Limited. It is a Catholic school and is conducted in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, as interpreted by the Bishop of the Diocese, and the Mercy ethos.

Sacred Heart College Kyneton is also a business (albeit a not-for-profit organisation) with assets and liabilities and, importantly, the need for a managed cashflow. As with any other business, the College has obligations to employees, creditors and loan entities, with payments which have to be met when they fall due.

In determining the fee structure for the College, the College Finance Committee and the College Advisory Council endeavour to keep fees affordable and as realistic as possible to cater for the wide income range of parents at the College. They balance this against the need to provide ever-expanding curriculum opportunities and facilities to students.

This policy outlines the principles that underpin Sacred Heart College, Kyneton's approach to the collection of fees. It also outlines procedures pertaining to annual fee schedules, accounts, payment options, fee concessions, and the recovery of unpaid fees.

Principles underlying our Fee Policy

- Sacred Heart College Kyneton is committed to ensuring the long-term educational effectiveness and operational capacity of the College.
- Consistent with the shared mission of the Catholic Church and the Sisters of Mercy, the Principal may grant fee concessions to families experiencing financial hardship. Families wishing to apply for fees concession need make this application in writing attaching the fees concession form.
- A variety of fee payment procedures and options are available to assist families to meet their financial obligations.
- As part of the enrolment procedure, parents sign off on who is responsible for the payment of fees and levies, any change in circumstances, the college requires notification in writing from both parents / guardians.
- Non-payment of fees, wherein parents consistently disregard reminder notices, fail to discuss the issue with the College, and/or default on alternative arrangements, may lead, as a last resort, to legal action being taken, with any subsequent legal costs being added to the family account.
- Enrolment numbers, corresponding staffing and other resourcing implications are factored into fee structures and settings.

Procedures

1. School Fees and Levies

Parents receive an annual letter to provide updated fee information. All relevant information and updates are available on the College website. The following are the components that make up fees

- Fees
 - Tuition Fees
 - Composite Levy – Camps, Incursions and Excursions
 - Building Levy
- Levies – varies between students
 - Digital levy
 - Music Lesson
 - VET and VCAL

2. Enrolment Variations during the Year (Commencement, Withdrawal, Extended Absence)

The College recognises that circumstances often change after the commencement of a school year, resulting in some numbers of students joining or leaving the College during the year, or taking extended leave of absence.

- **Enrolment during the year.** Families who enroll a student during the school year will be charged on a pro-rata basis. However, the Enrolment Levy (a one-off levy payable at the time of enrolment) is payable in full and will not be refunded.
- **Delayed commencement.** Once a student is enrolled for a school year, it is expected that he or she will commence at Sacred Heart College on the designated first day of classes. All fees, levies and charges are billed and payable from that date, whether the student is present or not. The College cannot suspend school fees for vacant places, particularly given that other families on the waiting list are seeking that place. Families who anticipate some delay in commencement, for whatever reason, should either factor in the cost of school fees or formally exit the College and make that place available for someone else.
- **Periods of extended absence.** For existing students who make application for an extended period of absence, some College fees and levies will still be payable. Depending on the nature and length of absence, some fee concession can be applied. As a minimum, the Capital Levy will be charged during any period of extended absence. **Each such application will be considered by the Principal upon written request, with a least One Terms notice.**
- **Absence due to illness.** Where a student is absent from school for a term or more due to prolonged illness or injury, some form of fee remission may apply. The level of remission will be determined by a number of factors including the length of absence and the nature and level of ongoing support provided by the College for the student's ongoing learning and wellbeing. **All requests for fee reduction due to such circumstances must be made in writing to the Principal, and cases will be considered an individual basis.** Families need to be mindful that the College continues to employ staff and resource the school based on every student enrolled in the College.
- **Withdrawal of a student during the year.** It is the College's understanding that students are enrolled at the College until they complete Year 12. **If the student is exiting the College prior to this time one term's notice in writing is required in lieu of fees charged.** If pastoral reasons underpin the withdrawal a pro-rate reduction in fees may be granted with the approval of the Principal.

3. Part-time Enrolment

All students have an annual program of learning. At senior levels the annual programs may finish at different times e.g. VCAL and VCE. In addition, some senior programs involve students being off-campus for a portion of their time. These are still regarded as full year programs and fee adjustments are not made according to a student's attendance on any given day. Students on work placements generate significant administrative requirements and have supervisory visits in the workplace by College staff.

A student whose learning program is significantly diminished may be considered as a part time student and as such may be entitled to some remission of fees. The level of remission is determined on an individual basis and takes account of the level of part-time status, the number of days attended and the level of support required. Requests for fee reductions in such circumstances must be made in writing to the Principal.

4. Arrangements for Fee Account Payment

All families **MUST** select a payment plan from the options provided on the 'Family School Fee Agreement' proforma. The standard fee payment plan will be for the ten months from February to November; however, twelve-month plans can be accommodated upon request. Please note that the College will continue with payment plans beyond 30 November in any given year, where there are fees and levies still owing.

5. School Camps and Retreats

The College uses various external providers and venues to facilitate camps and Retreats at Years 7–12. This involves advanced bookings and deposits, under contract, for the number of students taking part. Most providers have a policy of strictly no refunds. The College requires details of pre-existing medical conditions well in advance of camps/retreats so that bookings can be adjusted.

Because of the arrangement described, the **College is not in a position to refund money once bookings are finalised and the provider has been paid.** It is therefore recommended that parents take out travel insurance when that opportunity is forwarded with Camp documentation.

6. Extra Curricula Activities

Music Tuition, Overseas trips and the Debutante Ball are available to students on the condition that the family school fee account is up to date. This will be taken into account before approval is given to undertake such optional activities. If special circumstances exist, they will need to be considered and approved by the Principal.

7. Change in Family Circumstances

College policy requires both parents to sign the initial Enrolment Form. Amongst other things, the signatures represent acceptance of liability for all school fees **for the duration of their child's enrolment at the College.** Enrolment at Sacred Heart College is NOT a sequence of annual contracts.

If family and parental arrangements alter, and the liability for the payment of fees changes from one party to another, each party is expected to notify the College in writing so that a new Agreement can be made. The notification must clearly indicate the change in liability for the payment of fees and the commencement date of this change in liability where this communication is not formally provided by the parties to the College, a re-enrolment interview will be scheduled by the Principal.

If the College does not receive a mutually accepted agreement from the parties involved, the original signatories to the Enrolment form will be jointly held liable for all debts incurred. The Enrolment form will be jointly and separately binding on all parties for the duration of a student's enrolment.

8. Conveyance Allowance / Bus Travel

Eligibility for a Conveyance Allowance to cover the private leg of a school bus journey is governed by the State Government Conveyance Allowance program. Students who enroll at Sacred Heart College, but who live closer to another Catholic secondary school, are not eligible to claim a conveyance allowance for private bus or private car, and therefore must meet the cost of that part of the journey to and from school.

9. Fee Concessions

In addition to the discounts that are offered for siblings, the College may consider a reduction in fees where there are circumstances of financial hardship. Parents who do have such difficulties are urged to contact the Principal or the Director of Business as soon as they are aware that a problem exists. Families must apply in writing and fill in the "Application for Fee Concession" before and concession will be considered.

Any granting of concessions is at the discretion of the College Principal, and will only be considered after a meeting between a family and the Principal or Director of Business, during which the circumstances justifying the need for a concession will be fully discussed. Full disclosure of financial details is required (in confidence). There is a form available from the Director of Business for this purpose. Families will be required to resume payment of fees if there is a favorable change to their financial circumstances.

Fee concession are considered only for the current year and don't automatically roll over. Therefore, each year families must reapply for fee concession.

10. Action on Overdue Accounts

At the time of acceptance of enrolment, a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) sign the Enrolment Acceptance Form that incorporates obligations and agreements about the payment in full of all fees annually.

The payment of fees is binding upon each signatory to the agreement. Each signatory to the enrolment confirmation form, and/or subsequent re-enrolment form, will be solely or jointly responsible for the timely payment of fees.

Fees and levies are charged upfront and annually in December. Agreed payment arrangements from the range of options provided by the College are requested to be honoured in a timely manner to facilitate payments from 1 February of each school year.

Non-payment of fees, wherein parent(s)/guardian(s) consistently disregard reminder notices and contact attempts, fail to discuss the issue with the College, and/or default on alternative arrangements, the College reserves the right to take legal action to recover outstanding debts from the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If deemed to be necessary, this action may occur whilst the student is still attending the College.

Overdue fees and costs of debt-collection will be charged to accounts that remain in arrears, where no contact has been made with the Director of Business to discuss the financial circumstances.

The College adopts normal commercial collection procedures in respect of outstanding school fees where no alternative arrangements for payment have been made. Legal action is taken on overdue accounts as a last resort after all other measures have failed. This procedure on Overdue Accounts at Sacred Heart College Kyneton is consistent with other Catholic Secondary Colleges.

To avoid this outcome, families are urged to keep Sacred Heart College informed of your current situation. As a last resort, failure on the part of Sacred Heart College or a Debt Collection Agency to achieve a satisfactory outcome may lead to the College pursuing legal action.

11. Change in Family Situation

If family and parental/guardianship arrangements alter, and the liability for the payment of fees changes from one party to another, either during the course of the student's enrolment or after they have left the College, each party is expected to notify the College so that a new Agreement can be made.

A Change of Detail form is available from the Registrar and Director of Business on request. The document must clearly indicate the change in liability for the payment of fees and the commencement date of this change in liability. Both parties must sign this document.

If the College does not receive a mutually accepted agreement from the parties involved, the original signatories to the enrolment and subsequent re-enrolment forms received will be binding upon each signatory to the agreement.

Related Policies

Sacred Heart College Kyneton Enrolment Policy

Sacred Heart College Kyneton Privacy Policy

Mercy Education Ltd Policy 8.01A, Setting School Fees at Mercy Colleges

Mercy Education Ltd Policy 8.02A, Collection of Outstanding School Fees at Mercy Colleges

Catholic Education Melbourne Policy 2.27, *School Fees* www.cemelb.catholic.edu.au

RESPONSIBILITY	College Advisory Council Principal Director of Business
DATE UPDATED	December 2019
REVIEW DATE	December 2021 (Annual Review)