

Title	School Fees and Levies Policy
Description of policy	This policy sets out obligations and procedures to ensure that school fees are charged consistently and in accordance with the fee levels and procedures set by the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) and School Board/School Community Council.
Required because?	To ensure consistent treatment of fees across all CECG schools.
Description of changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inserted new information regarding enrolment and fees for overseas students, after SALT requested no separate Overseas student Policy. The information is relevant to fee treatment but enrolment information will also be included in the Enrolment Policy at the earliest opportunity. • Clarified that the decision for fee concession sits with the Fees Committee, rather than the Fee Committee making a recommendation to the School Board, to protect privacy. Current policy and guide suggest, in different places, that the Fees Committee ‘recommends’ a decision to the School Board or ‘approves’ the decision itself. The Fees Committee should make concession decisions and not share information with non-Committee members, to protect privacy. • Inserted a table and flow chart to provide greater clarity on the process for collecting outstanding fees, including suggested timeframes to promote consistency (not mandatory). • Reformatting and minor language changes to improve clarity. • Updated the definitions of family relationships to ensure consistency across CECG documents.
Applies to	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific: Schools
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input type="checkbox"/> Students only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff and students
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Major revision of existing document <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor revision of existing document
Related documents	Application for Fee Reduction Fee Concession Guide Finance Administration for Schools Policy



Intranet Category	Schools Finance
Review Date	December 2021
Trim Reference Number	R88268

Approval authority for this version:	Finance, Infrastructure, and Strategy Leader
Approval Date:	17/6/2020
Accountable authority	Finance, Infrastructure, and Strategy Leader
Responsible officer/team	Senior Officer Schools Accounting and Compliance/School Finance Support

1. Summary

- 1.1 This policy sets out obligations and procedures to ensure that tuition fees are charged in accordance with the fee levels and procedures set by the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) and that local fees are charged with the fee levels approved by the School Board/School Community Council.
- 1.2 It ensures that:
- Schools and parents understand how family structure are relevant for fee billing purposes.
 - fee reductions and write offs are authorised appropriately and consistently, to support those in genuine financial need and allow these parents to maintain their dignity,
 - refunds are granted consistently if children are removed from schools, and
 - appropriate action is taken to recover unpaid school fees.
- 1.3 It applies to all Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) schools in the ACT and NSW.
- 1.4 The policy is applicable to all students who are Australian citizens or Australian Residents (with either Permanent Resident Visas or Temporary Resident Visas). Overseas students may have different fee eligibility, which is addressed in Attachment 1.

2. School Fees and Levies Policy

- 2.1 CECG policy is that no child is to be denied Catholic schooling simply because of an inability (as opposed to an unwillingness) of a parent/guardian to meet financial requirements.
- 2.2 School fees must be charged in accordance with the fee levels and principles set annually by the CEC. The CEC-determined percentage of tuition fees is remitted to the Catholic Education Office at the end of each term.
- 2.3 To ensure that no child is denied Catholic schooling, schools may discount or remit fees in line with the fee concessions procedures set out below. Where families are deemed to have the capacity to pay but they are experiencing temporary cash flow problems, schools may decide to accept reduced payments over longer periods (a Payment Plan).
- 2.4 Every effort is to be made by the school to recover fees from parents who are deemed to have the capacity to pay, in line with procedures below.
- 2.5 For billing purposes, the person who has responsibility for paying school fees and levies is the person(s) who signed the Enrolment Form or (from 2020 onwards) the Enrolment Form and Parent Commitment Agreement (PCA).

3. School Fees

- 3.1 School fees consist of:
- Local school fees set by the School Board/Community Council
 - The CEO tuition fee which is set annually by the CEC, and
 - For ACT schools only: a voluntary Building Fund contribution which is also set annually by the CEC.

- 3.2 The local school fee structure and amounts are set annually by the School Board/Community Council as part of the school's annual budget process.
- 3.3 School Boards/Community Councils are encouraged to review and adjust local fees each year as required, as opposed to larger, less frequent increases, to plan for expenditure price increases and future maintenance and capital needs.

4. Eligibility to be treated as a family for billing purposes

- 4.1 Establishing who is in the family relationship is important in order to apply sibling discounts, to determine enrolment priority, and for invoicing.
- 4.2 Where parents reside at different addresses, shared parental responsibility for fees is evidenced for CECG by signing the Enrolment Form or (from 2020 onwards) the Enrolment Form and Parent Commitment Agreement.
- 4.3 . Schools will assume 50% shared parental responsibility and invoice each parent accordingly unless advised otherwise. In line with the CECG Family Law Policy, parents must give to the school copies of any relevant parenting agreements or orders.
- 4.4 A sibling relationship exists where two or more children have one or both parents in common, including adopted children and step children, and the shared parent(s) have parental responsibility for the children.
- 4.5 Schools may apply sibling discounts to fees, which respects the choice to enrol multiple children in Catholic Education. Families are eligible to receive sibling discounts if they:
- have multiple children in CECG schools, and
 - pay full fees for at least one child.
- 4.6 Full fees apply to the eldest child in the family (subject to fee concession guidelines) with sibling discounts applied to the younger siblings.
- 4.7 A child cannot be a sibling for more than one family situation for sibling discount purposes. Where a child may be considered to be part of two or more family structures, they can only have the sibling discount arrangement for that child applied to one family (usually the family where the child predominately resides).

5. Invoicing School Fees

- 5.1 All families must be invoiced the full fees and the invoiced amounts processed through the school's accounts, with remissions and write-offs processed separately.
- 5.2 Schools must send fee invoices at the beginning of each term (preferably in the first two weeks). The front office staff will check invoice batches to make sure all relevant families have been invoiced each term.

6. Fee Reduction and Fees Committee

- 6.1 Parents may apply for fees reduction in circumstances of financial hardship by completing the CECG Application for Fee Reduction. Parents may also discuss payment plans with schools.
- 6.2 Please note Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) are not entitled to apply for fee concessions of any kind. This is as a result of the visa type, terms and conditions. Refer to Attachment A for more information.

- 6.3 The School Board/School Community Council will establish a Fees Committee to consider all applications. The Fees Committee will consider all requests for fee remissions in the strictest confidence. Personal information of applicants must not be divulged to non-Fee Committee members (personal information is any information from which a person could reasonably be identified).
- 6.4 Fee reductions and write offs are approved by the Fees Committee in line with the CECG School Fee Concession Guide. The Committee may also extend the time over which it will accept the payment of outstanding fees (a payment plan).
- 6.5 The Fees Committee may grant full remission, part remission, or decide that a family is not eligible for a remission.
- 6.6 The Fees Committee may include the Principal, Board/School Community Council Treasurer (or other appropriate independent person not employed at the school) and the School Secretary, Bursar or Business Manager. Other people may be included in the committee if it is necessary to consider applications, and it is possible to do so while maintaining confidentiality of applications.

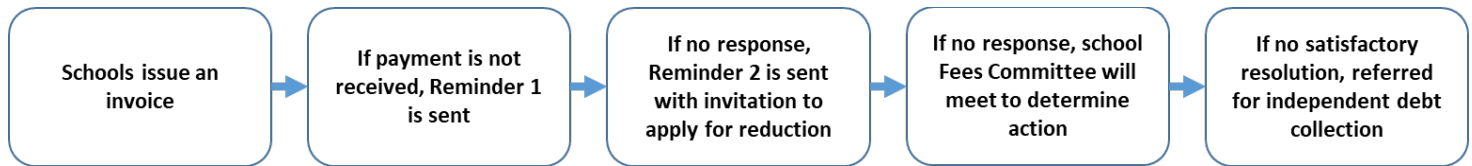
7. Refund of School Fees where a child is withdrawn during term time

- 7.1 If a child is withdrawn from the school and departs in the first half of the term, and the school has received at least two weeks written notice, the family is eligible for a refund of 50% of that term's fees plus all fees for any subsequent terms paid.
- 7.2 If notice is not received at least two weeks' before the midpoint of the term, refunds are at the discretion of the Principal giving regard to the circumstances of departure.
- 7.3 Where the date of departure is in the second half of the term, the family is not entitled to a refund of fees for that term but are eligible to a refund for subsequent terms paid.
- 7.4 This approach ensures a balance between the needs of families and costs already incurred by schools.

8. Collection of Unpaid Fees

- 8.1 The processes under the CECG School Fee Concession Guide ensure no child is denied Catholic schooling simply because of an inability (as opposed to an unwillingness) of a parent/guardian, to meet financial requirements.
- 8.2 In the absence of fee waiver under the Fee Concession Guide, schools are expected to make every effort to recover unpaid fees. This respects every family's individual circumstances, their commitments to their school, and the needs of our students and schools.

8.3 The fees process includes the following stages and possible timeframes:



Step	Stage of Process	Action
One	Invoicing	The school sends an invoice indicating total fees, the due date, and methods of payment.
Two	Reminder 1	If fees are not received within two (2) weeks of the due date, the school will send a reminder letter notifying the parents that payment has not been received.
Three	Reminder 2	If no satisfactory response is received six (6) weeks after the due date, the school will send a second letter formally notifying parents of the missed payment. The letter also invites parents to arrange an appointment with the Principal to discuss, in confidence, any difficulty in paying their outstanding fees, and outlines the collection process.
Four	Consultation	If no satisfactory response is received ten (10) weeks after the due date, the School Fees Committee will decide whether formal recovery processes are appropriate. When considering debt recovery action, the Fees Committee takes into account the cost and value of recovery, the likelihood of success.
Five	Legal action	The school will refer the matter to an independent collection agency to make a final request for payment before commencing legal proceedings through the ACT or NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The school must contact the CECG Legal Counsel and Finance, Infrastructure and Strategy team to obtain a Power of Attorney (POA) for the independent collection agency to bring the action before the Tribunal.

8.4 Under no circumstances is the school or its agents permitted to conduct matters in an intimidating or threatening manner, or seize goods and chattels for the recovery of outstanding debts.

9. Definitions

9.1 Full Fee Paying Overseas Students: Overseas students that are not covered by Government Recurrent Funding. They must pay in advance, per term, the full fee for overseas students determined by the Catholic Education Commission. They include all Overseas students *except* Overseas students on official student exchange programs.

9.2 Fee Reduction: An arrangement under the CECG School Fees Concession Guide where a parent is not required to pay the full amount of fees.

9.3 Fee Write Off: The process by which a school no longer records a fee as outstanding on its books and deems the fee to be irrecoverable.

- 9.4 **Overseas student:** Students that do not have Australian Citizenship, Permanent Residence Visa or Temporary Residence Visa. They may have temporary student visas (visa number 500) or, in certain circumstances, Tourist visas (visa numbers 600 and 651).
- 9.5 **Parent:** an adult with shared, primary or sole Parental Responsibility for the Student's care. This can include a biological parent, a legal guardian, a carer, a foster parent or a step parent.
- 9.6 **Parental Responsibility:** all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law, Parents have in relation to children.
- 9.7 **Sibling Relationship:** A sibling relationship exists where two or more children have one or both parents in common, which would include adopted children and step children where one or both parents in common have parental responsibility for all children.

10. Related Documents and Legislation

10.1 Related CECG Documents:

- Application for Fee Reduction Form
- Fee Reduction Guide
- Finance Administration for Schools Policy

11. Contact

- 11.1 For support or further questions relating to this policy, contact the CECG Finance, Infrastructure and Strategy Service Area.

Attachment 1 – Overseas Student Enrolment and Fees

CECG schools are required to identify and report through school census whether enrolled students are overseas students. Australian schools generally do not receive Recurrent Government Funding for overseas students¹.

Establishing Citizenship, Residence, or Visa Status

Families must provide a student's birth certificate or passport as a standard part of enrolment.

Each birth certificate presented should be checked to establish the birth places of the parents. Where the child's birth certificate lists one or both parents as having been born in Australia, CECG will accept the child's birth certificate as evidence of Australian Citizenship or permanent residence.

Where the student's birth certificate lists both parents as having been born outside Australia, at least one of the parents must supply documentation to establish their child's Australian citizenship or permanent residence status. This might be an Australian passport, certificate of citizenship, or an entry visa in a passport granting the parent permanent residency status. Where neither parent can produce this documentation, the child may be enrolled, but as an overseas student.

Full Fee Paying Overseas students (ACT Schools Only) – Visas 500, 600, 651

Students on specified Temporary student visas (visa number 500) or Tourist visas (visa numbers 600 and 651) are not covered by Government Recurrent Funding. These students are classified as Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS). They must pay in advance, per term, the full fee for overseas students. The term's fee is calculated by dividing the annual full fee over the year's 4 terms (K to Year 11) or 3 terms (Year 12). It is a condition of this type of visa that no fee concessions or reductions of any kind will be given by the School.

There are no refunds or remissions given for students who are Full Fee Paying Overseas Students. An exception to Overseas Students being full fee paying in this category, is where they are on a Temporary student visa AND on a Student Exchange Program (see below).

Temporary Student Visa 500

CECG is no longer CRICOS (Commonwealth Register of Institution and Courses for Overseas Students) registered and students cannot enrol with a Student Visa (500 Visa) in ACT Schools, unless:

- The child's parent has a student visa 500 (e.g. to enrol in University or further education), and
- The child is a dependent child of the person on the student visa 500.

Not being CRICOS registered means that no CECG school can issue a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) to allow a student to apply for their own Student Visa.

Temporary Visitor Visa 600 or 651

Visa class 600 or 651 allows the family to visit Australia for a maximum of 12 months for purposes other than business or medical treatment.

¹ Section 33 and section 6 *Australian Education Act 2013*

Students on these visas can enrol in schools, for a maximum of up to 3 months of study over the 12 months.

Enrolment for students on temporary visitor visas may require discussion with the family to ensure the student's English skills are sufficient to participate fully in classes that lack intensive support for students with English as an additional language. The discussions may include other study options, including intensive English classes.

Overseas students on Student Exchange Programs Visa 500

Student exchange programs provide Australian secondary students with the opportunity to undertake studies overseas and for overseas students to study in an Australian school. Student exchange programs provide a broad educational experience for students and participating school communities.

Exchange students must enter the country on a *Student Visa Subclass 500 Secondary School Exchange Program* issued via an Acceptance Advice for Secondary Exchange Student (AASES) form. A minimum exchange period in the ACT and NSW is 3 months or one academic school term, with a maximum period of 12 months.

Exchange students are treated as local resident students (Section 6 *Australian Education Regulation 2013*) and covered by Recurrent Grant Funding, so they are only required to pay local school fees and levies.

Exchange students who attend the school for a period shorter than 6 months are not reported in the Census. Exchange students must hold 500 student visa – a student cannot be part of an exchange program if they are on a visitor visa (600 or 651 visa).

NSW Schools – Student Exchange Programs

Overseas students will be accepted in NSW Schools if they come through a **registered external exchange program**. The exchange organisation should negotiate directly with a school and obtain written permission from the Principal to enrol an exchange student. Enrolment of an exchange student is at the discretion of the Principal.

Exchange students must be enrolled for a minimum of 3 months or one academic term to a maximum of 12 months. They must come through an exchange provider such as Rotary Youth Exchange Australia; SCCE (Southern Cross Cultural Exchange); Student Exchange Programs; Students of the World; or AFS Intercultural Programs Australia. These registered providers oversee the compliance for overseas students.

Students on Bridging Visas

A bridging visa is a temporary visa that is granted to allow the visa holder to stay in Australia while their application is processed for a new longer-term visa (aka 'substantive visa'). It creates a 'bridge' from the old substantive visa to the new one.

Students on bridging visas are not considered overseas students. They are entitled to recurrent government funding and pay fees as local students.

School Requirements for Visa Students

Schools must retain copies of the student and parent/s visa information, passport, documentation and any assessment material used by the school to make the decision that a student satisfies the definition

for inclusion as a Student on a visa. This material may be required by the department to validate a School's Census submission.

All enrolment requests by families or students on any of the above visa conditions must be approved through CECG. Schools are required to contact the School's Accounting team to request approval in writing.

[Refund of School Fees and Levies for FFPOS](#)

Refund if the Full Fee Paying Overseas Student is withdrawn from school:

If a student is withdrawn from the school and the date of departure is in the first half of the term, and the school has received at least two weeks written notice, the family is eligible for a refund of 50% of the term's fees and all fees paid for subsequent terms.

If at least two weeks written notice is not provided to the school, any refund will be at the discretion of the Principal, who will consider the circumstances of departure.

Refund if the Full Fee Paying Overseas Student visa class changes:

If a FFPOS transitions to a permanent or temporary residence visa during term, a refund of the difference between the full fee and local fee will not be provided by the School in the term the change takes place. The local fee and payment conditions will apply from the beginning of the first term after the visa class change.