

APPLICABLE TO	Catholic Schools Office and diocesan schools		
DOCUMENT OWNER	Director of Schools		
APPROVAL DATE	June 2017		
APPROVED BY	CSO Leadership Team		
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	May 2016	NEXT REVIEW DATE	June 2019
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Debt Collection Procedures Enrolment Policy Financial Legislative and Regulatory Requirements Guidelines School Fees Policy		

Purpose

The procedures outlined in this document have been developed to support the Catholic Schools Office School Fees Policy.

In particular, these procedures outline steps to be followed in relation to the collection of school fees.

Scope

These procedures apply to the Catholic Schools Office and all Diocesan schools.

Responsibilities

Director of Schools

The Director of Schools is responsible for communicating these procedures to the Catholic Schools Office Leadership Team and Diocesan School Principals.

The Director of Schools is also responsible for ensuring that these procedures are reviewed as required.

Head of Financial Services

The Head of Financial Services is responsible for ensuring that the administrative activities of the Financial Services Team and advice provided to Diocesan School Principals in relation to the collection of school fees is consistent with these procedures.

School Principals

School Principals are responsible for ensuring that all school-based activities in relation to the collection of school fees are consistent with these procedures.

Step by Step

1. COLLECTION OF SCHOOL FEES

Diocesan schools are expected to follow the steps outlined below in relation to the collection of school fees.

A flowchart of the fee collection process is provided as Appendix 1 of these procedures.

- 1.1 School fee structure and payment processes should be discussed with parents and/or carers at the time of enrolment.

Parents are to be issued with current information regarding fee types, billing rates and payment options.

- 1.2 Parents of students attending Diocesan schools should be provided with up-dated information regarding school fees rates and processes by November of each year in preparation for the following year.
- 1.3 Recurrent school fees including Tuition Fees, Diocesan Family School Building Levy and General Resources – Service Fees, and any other charges known in advance such as significant excursions, should be billed over the first three terms of the school year.

Where possible, all charges should be included on term invoices to reduce the administrative overhead that would be required for separate billing, collection, counting, receipting and reconciliation.

- 1.4 While a clearly defined, regular school fees billing and payment cycle is the preferred option, schools should ensure that parents and carers are able to pay fees with a minimum of difficulty.

To this end, schools are to make provisions for fees to be paid in a number of ways including direct debit, weekly, monthly, termly or yearly.

- 1.5 School Fee accounts are to be sent to parents/carers as early as possible each term and preferably no later than the end of week 2

Accounts should clearly indicate a pay-by-date or due date confirming that payment is due within 25 days of the account.

It is recommended that a reminder regarding payment of school fees be placed in school newsletters at the beginning of each term that accounts are issued. Reference to the link between receipt of fees, cash flow and educational expenditure commitments should be included to remind parents/carers of how fees are used

2. PROCEDURES FOR THE RECOVERY OF OVERDUE OR UNPAID FEES

Overdue or unpaid school fees can present significant challenges for Diocesan Schools.

While it is expected that parents and/or carers meet their financial obligations to pay fees and that schools meet their obligations to sound financial management practices, it is also expected that the recovery of unpaid fees will be pursued giving due regard to individual circumstances and the principles that underpin this policy.

It is expected that the first reminder that a school fees account is overdue will be a telephone call from the school to the parent or carer, if the fees are unpaid after 25 days of the account being issued as per clause 1.5 above.

The following steps are to be taken in relation to the collection of fees that remain unpaid after initial telephone contact.

- 2.1 A formal notification of overdue school fees account should be send to parents and/or carers if payment has not been received after the initial telephone call and within 30 days of the initial account.

Notification should include a letter signed by the School Principal or Designated Person outlining a requirement to make payment within 7 days and offering an opportunity to meet, and a copy of the initial school fees statement.

A sample letter is included as Appendix 2 to these procedures.

- 2.2 If school fees remain unpaid after 2.1 above, and no attempt has been made by parents and/or carers to settle the outstanding account or make contact with the school, a second letter should be sent under the Principal's or Designated Person's signature , seeking immediate payment and

outlining possible actions, including referral of the matter to the Head of Financial Services at the Catholic Schools Office.

A sample letter for this step is included as Appendix 3 to these procedures.

- 2.3 If school fees remain unpaid after 2.2 above, and no attempt has been made by parents and/or carers to settle the outstanding account or make contact with the school 7 days after the date of the letter, a third letter should be sent, under the Principal's or Designated Person's signature, informing parents and/or carers that the matter has been referred to the Head of Financial Services at the Catholic Schools Office.

A sample letter for this step is included as Appendix 4 to these procedures.

- 2.4 Schools must advise the Head of Financial Services if payment has not been made after 7 days of the third letter being sent, as per 2.3 above.

Advice to the Head of Financial Services should include details of all steps taken to recover the outstanding fees.

The Head of Financial Services will issue a letter to parents and/or carers on behalf of the Director of Schools seeking payment of the outstanding account and notifying that the Catholic Schools Office may appoint a debt collection agency to pursue the matter if no response is received.

- 2.5 In circumstances where a debt collection agency is engaged to recover unpaid school fees the Catholic Schools Office will:

- Advise the Director of Schools and the School Principal or Designated Person
- Ensure the process and procedures for collection of the fees as outlined in this policy has been followed
- Confirm that the school has attempted to make phone contact with the parents and/or carers
- Consult with the parish priest if necessary or appropriate

3. FEE CLEARANCE

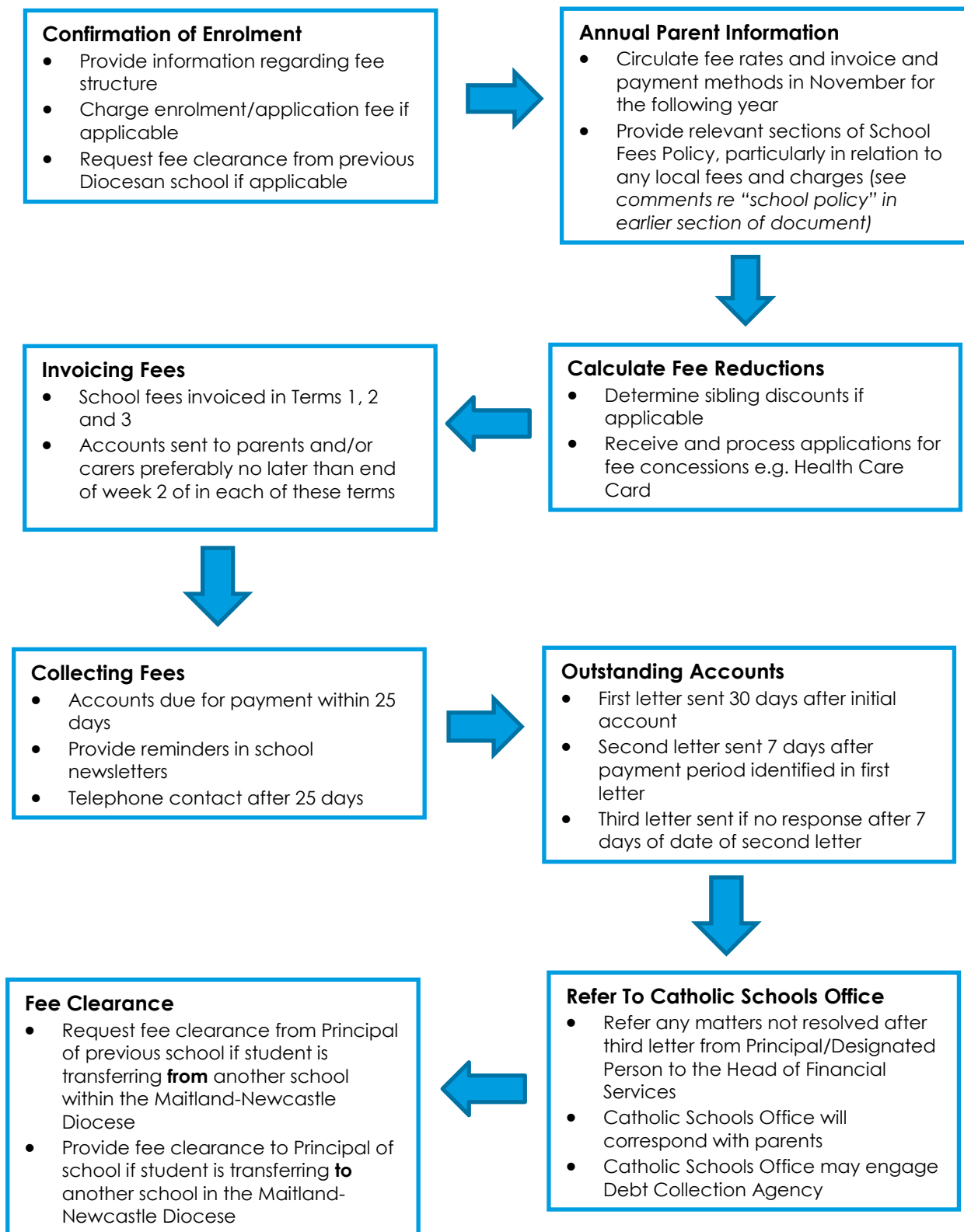
Finalisation of school fee payments to Diocesan schools is a condition of enrolment in any other school within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

To this end, School Principals should seek, and be provided with, a fee clearance prior to finalising a student's enrolment, if they have previously attended another school in the Diocese. The fee clearance request should be made directly from school to school.

Parents and/or carers of students progressing from infants to primary schools or primary schools to secondary schools within the Diocese should be informed well in advance of enrolment finalisation if there is a pending matter of non-payment of school fees that could negatively impact on the enrolment proceeding.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: PROCEDURE FOR INVOICING AND COLLECTING SCHOOL FEES



APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO PARENTS AND/OR CARERS IF FEES UNPAID AFTER 30 DAYS

(to be printed on school letterhead and sent under Principal signature and printed)

(insert date)

Name

Address

Address

Dear

RE: Outstanding School Fees Account

Our records show that school fees for *(insert name/s of children)* were not paid by the due date of *(insert date)*.

I understand that it is possible to overlook due dates of accounts in the busyness of everyday life however, as school fees are essential to the financial viability of our school it would be appreciated if the account could be paid in full before *(insert date 7 days from date of letter)*.

If you are unable to meet this request, please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

.....
(insert name of Principal/Designated Person)

Inc. School Fees Statement

APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO PARENTS AND/OR CARERS IF FEES UNPAID AFTER FIRST LETTER

(to be printed on school letterhead and sent under Principal signature and printed)

(insert date)

Name
Address
Address

Dear

RE: Outstanding School Fees Account

I refer to my earlier correspondence of *(insert date of first letter)* regarding your account for school fees and note that the school has not received a response. I am now writing to inform you that the account is now well overdue and that your attention to this matter is required as a matter of urgency.

If you are experiencing difficulty in paying the outstanding amount, I request that you make an appointment to meet with me at your earliest convenience so that satisfactory arrangements can be made to address this matter. Fee concessions may be granted in cases of financial hardship or other special circumstances.

If no contact is made in response to this letter and the fees remain outstanding as at *(insert date 7 days from date of letter)*, I am obliged to refer the matter to the Head of Financial Services at the Catholic Schools Office for further action.

Yours sincerely

.....
(insert name of Principal/Designated Person)

APPENDIX 4: LETTER TO PARENTS AND/OR CARERS IF FEES UNPAID AFTER SECOND LETTER

(to be printed on school letterhead and sent under Principal signature and printed)

(insert date)

Name

Address

Address

Dear

RE: Outstanding School Fees Account

Despite repeated communication from the school in relation to your outstanding school fees account I note that there has been no contact from you in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The school accepts its obligation to support families with limited financial resources who desire a Catholic education for their children and is able to negotiate suitable fee arrangements with these families. However, when such situations arise, it is the responsibility of parents to contact the school to request a meeting to discuss the required arrangements.

As you have not paid the outstanding school fees nor made a suitable arrangement with the school, I have referred this matter to the Head of Financial Services at the Catholic Schools Office for further action.

Yours sincerely

.....

(insert name of Principal/Designated Person)