



RATIONALE

Catholic schools have a responsibility to make Catholic education available to all Catholic students whose parents seek a Catholic education for them, insofar as this is possible, while embodying the Church's special preference for the poor and disadvantaged. However, schools operate under considerable financial constraints. Hence, parents are asked to make a commitment to support catholic education financially by paying fees.

The Bishops of WA have approved the collection of school fees from parents as a necessary contribution to the costs of delivering a Catholic education.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy School Fees shall be considered to be tuition fees, levies and other charges.

PRINCIPLES

1. The collection of school fees shall be approached in the spirit of Christian charity and justice. The College shall actively pursue the collection of school fees where parents have the capacity to pay fees.
2. The practice of charity requires that requests for fee concessions be treated with dignity, compassion and confidentiality.
3. The inability to pay school fees shall never be the reason for the non-enrolment or exclusion of any child from Mercedes College.
4. Every effort shall be made to protect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to parents and the payment of school fees.

PROCEDURES

1. The College, in consultation with the Sisters, shall determine the annual fees and charges.
2. The annual Schedule of Fees, Charges and Conditions shall be available on the College website under enrolments with the College prospectus and application for enrolment.
3. The annual Schedule of Fees, Charges and Conditions shall be sent to each family with the first account for the year. This schedule outlines concessions available, various methods of payment and the associated timeline for payment.
4. At interview, each new family will be urged to meet with a member of the College finance team and set up a payment plan if necessary. Any family experiencing financial hardship should communicate this difficulty with either the Principal or Bursar.
5. Where parents have ignored all reasonable attempts to negotiate a fee payment strategy and further action is required:
 - Documentation shall be kept on each attempt to resolve the problems of outstanding fees
 - Parents are notified that the services of a debt collection agency or solicitor will be engaged to recover outstanding fees
 - A summons can be issue by the College and judgement entered against the parent. The Congregational Leader will be informed of such action