

Parade College

School Collection Fee Policy



Background

The School Fee Collection Policy sets out the principles and guidelines to be followed by College staff regarding procedures for the collection of school fees and related charges in a prompt and orderly manner. The Principal will be the final arbiter of all decisions in relation to fee collection. It will refer to the College Mission and Vision Statements, the Four Touchstones of the EREA Charter and the EREA Fee Collection Policy to inform and determine any action to be taken in relation to fee collection.

The policy also identifies steps parents and guardians can take should they seek to make alternative financial arrangements regarding the payment of fees because of particular and identifiable financial difficulty. In fairness to the College community, a clear *Fee Collection Policy* is an essential step toward ensuring the long-term viability of the College by minimising the level of outstanding school fees, without denying any worthy student and family an education because of financial difficulty.

Principles

1. In terms of its expressed identity as a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition, Parade College aims to be as financially accessible as possible to Catholic and other families who wish to join the Parade community.
2. Parade College is committed to providing the best possible education to its students as unique and talented individuals, irrespective of their academic, socio-economic or cultural background.
3. A key value is fairness, and the prime objective is to ensure that the financial burden on families with children attending Parade College is borne equitably across the whole College community.
4. In line with Edmund Rice schools' charism and the "preferential option for the poor," the policy also recognises that, in certain exceptional circumstances, some families will not be able to fully meet their fee commitments and will be offered every reasonable assistance to ensure that their child is not denied an education because of this.
5. The Principal is ultimately responsible for the policies and practices of the College and will always work with the Community to ensure that the values of justice, fairness, inclusivity and respect are employed to protect the human dignity of all members of the Community, especially in the very sensitive and delicate situations where families' financial circumstances change.
6. The Policy is consistent with the *College Mission Statement*, pastoral Care Policies, Catholic Education Office policies, and EREA policies.
7. The policy also includes a mechanism for consideration of a revised fee payment plan where exceptional circumstances warrant this.
8. Information regarding any family's financial situation or any special arrangements negotiated under this policy remains confidential between the family, the Principal, and the college Officers involved in implementing this arrangement.

Policy

The College expects that families will honour their financial commitment to pay fees.

The School Advisory Council produces this policy to inform families of the principles and guidelines that govern the collection of school fees and related charges and the provision for negotiated arrangements if families' financial circumstances change.

Guidelines

The following procedures are established to ensure that parents know their responsibility regarding school fee payments.

Enrolment Procedure

The procedure for applying for enrolment of a new student requires parents or guardians to enter into a contract with the College for the payment of fees. The contract forms part of the application process. Parents or guardians are required to sign this contract and acknowledge that all parties signing the fee contract are jointly and severally liable. It is the practice of the College to have both parents/ guardians sign the fee contract where possible.

Should special arrangements be required for the payment of school fees when an application for enrolment is made, the principal should be formally notified via the relevant form for a fee concession.

Accounts

The College will forward school fee accounts at the end of the school year for the forthcoming year. The College offers various flexible methods of payment to accommodate individual family budgets. All families are expected to enter into a negotiated active payment plan, e.g. Direct Debit, within two weeks of the beginning of Term One.

All outstanding fees should be finalised no later than October of the current year. If, due to changes in circumstances, families are unable to finalise their fees by this date, they are welcome and encouraged to contact the College to discuss their situation and negotiate an arrangement to finalise their fees.

The School Advisory Council sets an administration fee, which may be charged where no active approved payment plan is in place. Payment plans are negotiated with the family and the Principal, or Principal's delegate, and the College will make every effort to accommodate family circumstances to ensure that the student's ability to attend the College is protected, especially in cases where the student is already enrolled with the College.

Overdue Accounts

If fees are not paid according to the agreed interval on the payment plan and special payment arrangements have not been agreed to by the College, an overdue statement and/or letter will be issued requesting fees be paid within a further specified period of time.

The college will make a range of attempts over periods of time to contact families who do not respond to letters, SMS, emails, phone calls, or other approaches to address the issue of outstanding fees. The Principal is kept informed of progress.

Suppose the satisfactory payment of fees still cannot be negotiated. In that case, the debt may be referred to a debt collection agency with the approval of the Principal or the Principal's delegate. All legal costs incurred will be payable by the family.

Special Payment Arrangements/Fee Concessions

The College Principal has the authority to reduce or waive fees for particular families as s/he sees fit and is responsible for reviewing and approving applications for special fee payment arrangements/concessions. Approval of applications will be considered in cases where the circumstances of parents or guardians have changed significantly enough to alter their financial ability to pay the full amount of levied school fees. The normal expectation is that families whose children are already enrolled with Parade can complete their educational journey with the College.

The Principal or the Principal's delegate will review the application after consulting with the appropriate College staff to ascertain any relevant additional information that may inform the situation. All information will be gathered and kept in strict confidence.

Requests for special payment arrangements/concessions should be made on the appropriate application form to the Principal. The principal will review each Application on its individual merit.

Where appropriate and deemed reasonable special arrangements for deferral of payment, and/or future recovery of these payments will need to be negotiated between the Principal and the parent/guardian and confirmed in writing. These will be reviewed annually by the Principal or Principal's delegate.

Implementation

1. The School Advisory Council may amend this policy as required.
2. Notwithstanding any principles or procedures contained in this policy, the School Advisory Council will seek to ensure that action taken to collect outstanding fees does not contradict the current practice and policies of Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) or Edmund Rice Education Victorian Schools Ltd.
3. For further information regarding this policy or to discuss any matters relating to school fees, please contact the College Business Manager.

Document control

Date Created	1 December 1998
Review History	March 2003, July 2007, July 2010, March 2014, August 2018, August 2024
Next review date	1 September 2026
Business Unit	Business Department
Responsible Officer	Fees Manager
Date of Approval	1 September 2024