



Catholic
Education
Commission
Tasmania

SCHOOL FEES ASSISTANCE POLICY

Policy No.01:2022

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1 RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be considered in conjunction with the following related documents:

Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CECT Enrolment Policy• CECT Privacy Policy
Applicable Laws	All laws in connection with the carrying out of work or the Workplace including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Privacy Act 1988</i>• United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)
Appendices	Appendix 1: Eligible Concession Cards

2 AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION

Date of approval	3 March 2021
Source of approval	Catholic Education Commission Tasmania
Start date	1 January 2022
Date of review	September 2025
Date of amendments	24 February 2022
Previous policies replaced by this Policy	School Fees Assistance Policy (8.09.2017)

SIGNED:



Chair of the CECT

DATE:

12.04.2022

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3 DEFINITIONS

Archdiocesan Schools is the 35 Catholic schools and colleges owned by the Roman Catholic Church Trust Corporation of the Archdiocese of Hobart.

CECT is the Catholic Education Commission Tasmania

CET is Catholic Education Tasmania, covers Religious Institute Schools operating in Tasmania and Catholic Education Commission Tasmania (CECT) controlled workplaces including the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO), Archdiocesan Schools and adjunct business undertakings such as childcare operations.

Child is a person under 18 years of age or a Student aged 18 years or older

Parent/Guardian is a person who has the legal authority and responsibility for the care of a Child

Principal is the person accountable for operating a School in accordance with the School's Governance and is directly responsible for overall leadership and management of the School.

Religious Institute Schools is the 3 schools run by Religious Institutes – Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (RI-MPJP) in Tasmania (Dominic College, St Francis Flexible Learning Centre and St Virgil's College).

School includes any Archdiocesan School or Religious Institute School

TCEO is the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, the operational arm of the CECT that provides professional support, administrative services, and guidance to all schools.

Worker includes any person who carries out work or services in any capacity for CET either as:

- an Employee
- a Volunteer
- a priest or a member of a religious order
- a contractor, subcontractor, or consultant
- an employee of a contractor, subcontractor, or consultant
- an employee of an employment agency or labour hire company
- an apprentice or trainee
- an external student gaining work experience or on work placement

4 RATIONALE

Catholic social teaching and tradition echo the Gospel imperative of a 'preferential option for the poor' and the practice of Catholic Education Tasmania has been to find a place for families that support its Catholic identity but are unable to participate in a Catholic school community without financial assistance.

While fees charged in Tasmanian Catholic schools and colleges are quite modest, financial assistance is a tangible way for the Catholic education sector to provide opportunities for the financially less fortunate families within our community to enrol their child at a Catholic school. No student will be refused enrolment, be excluded, or be disadvantaged because of an inability (as opposed to an unwillingness) on the part of the parents/guardians to meet financial requirements.

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In accordance with The Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools (2016), this policy endeavours to:

1. "Ensure that no family is precluded from enrolment on the basis of financial capacity."
2. "Develop strategies to encourage the disadvantaged and marginalised, especially Catholic families, mindful of the explicit strategies required to both attract and involve indigenous and humanitarian entrant families from the broader parish community."

5 PURPOSE

In the light of Catholic social teaching and the preferential option for the poor in the Gospels, the objective of this policy is to provide access to a Catholic education for those families whose children are eligible for enrolment but who are unable to meet the fee requirements because of financial hardship. It is also to ensure that fee remissions are granted appropriately and consistently so they support those with genuine financial hardship, and allow these parents/guardians to maintain their dignity.

6 GENERAL PRINCIPLES - *Supporting the rationale and purpose of this policy*

1. That Catholic schools are accessible to all families willing to support the Catholic identity regardless of their personal, financial and pastoral circumstances.
2. That no family supporting the Catholic identity should be denied a place at a Catholic school because of an inability (as opposed to an unwillingness) to pay full fees.
3. Each school Principal in taking appropriate advice and using the general guidelines outlined in this policy, should be attentive to the need to identify and support those families that may require financial assistance.
4. The provision of school fee remissions for families in financial hardship, will be at the discretion of the Principal, or delegate, based on a pastoral interview, completion of the Application for Fees Assistance Form and the supply of supporting documentation.
5. All families with the exception of humanitarian entrants in their first three years of enrolment, will be asked to pay a contribution to school fees. In some cases, this will be a small percentage of total fees charged and in all cases will be based on the capacity of the family to pay.
6. Allowance should be made in a school's budget for family discounts and fee remissions.
7. Government Grants provide a portion of the funding required to operate Catholic schools in Tasmania. The balance of costs is paid from school fees collected from families. Every effort is to be made by the School Board/School Administration to recover fees from parents who are deemed to have the capacity to pay. Where families are deemed to have the

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capacity to pay but they are experiencing temporary cash flow problems, schools may decide to accept reduced payments over longer periods.

8. An inability to pay is a determination made by the school and as such this policy attempts to provide a consistent approach to fee remissions.
9. It is recognised that families make choices and priorities in regards to their standard of living, investments, education and extra-curricular activities. This policy considers families that have chosen a Catholic education deem it important and that fee payments will be prioritised accordingly.
10. Extenuating circumstances may exist where a family can be given special consideration as they do not conform to the income or expenditure levels stipulated where, for instance, regular medical treatment or related travel is required. Pastoral consideration should also be given to humanitarian entrant and refugee families in setting school fees at an appropriate level.
11. A family arrangement for fee billing purposes is deemed to exist where an adult with parental responsibility has signed both/all enrolment forms and is responsible for the payment of school fees. Where a child may be considered to be part of two, or more family structures, the family discount may only be claimed by the family who is responsible for the payment of fees.

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7 GUIDELINES

1. All families must be charged full fees, with any approved family discount or remission processed through the school's accounts. The reasons for the granting of a fee remission must be documented.
2. There are four forms of fee assistance for families:
 - a) **Discount for families with a Concession Card (CC):**

Concession Card - A card provided by the Australian Government which is generally means tested based on income and subject to review.

To apply for this discount a Concession Card Discount Form (copy available from the School) needs to be completed. Provided the family has an eligible CC that qualifies for remission, the family will not be required to provide details of their financial position. The family will be automatically entitled to the maximum remission amount. If the family wishes to apply for a higher remission amount they will need to complete the Application for Fee Assistance Form (copy available from the School).

Details of eligible Concession Cards that receive the maximum fee remission are included in Appendix 1. If a family does not have an eligible CC, they can apply for remission by completing the Application for Fee Assistance Form (copy available from the School).

The card holder must be the person legally responsible for paying the school fees i.e. the person who has signed the enrolment form. The child must appear on the card as a Dependent. The card must be current on the first day of term.

These cards are valid for a period of one to two years and need to be renewed and verified by the school following the expiry date.

In circumstances where there is a split family (parents of the children are separated), fees are payable by both parents. If only one parent has an eligible CC, then the remission will be applied to 50% of the fees only. If both parents have an eligible CC, the full remission will be applied.

The maximum remission amount for an eligible CC will be adjusted annually by the Catholic Education Tasmania Executive Director, in consultation with the Director Corporate, and communicated to schools in Term 4 of each year. There are different maximum remissions set for primary students and secondary students. The maximum remission amount will apply to both Shared Funded and Direct Funded schools (copy available from the School).

The maximum remission amount will take into account all fees and levies payable except for interstate and overseas trips or optional activities, which would be charged in addition to the maximum amount payable.

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b) Discounts for families with three or more children in Catholic schools:

A family is eligible for family discounts regardless of whether all children attend the one Tasmanian Catholic School or different Tasmanian Catholic Schools.

Family discounts deducted from tuition fees will be offered as follows:

- Three Children: 10% for each child in a Tasmanian Catholic School.
- Four Children: 20% for each child in a Tasmanian Catholic School.
- Five or more Children: 30% for each child in a Tasmanian Catholic School.

The family discounts apply to families that have had their fees reduced to the maximum amount to pay due to an eligible CC (Refer Appendix 1).

The Family discount application process provides a family with three or more children an opportunity to apply for a family discount, which should be granted without the need for any further enquiry. There is a requirement to apply for family discounts each year as family circumstance may have changed. If children attend multiple Catholic Schools, those schools may verify enrolments at each school.

Parents who wish to pay full fees, without applying for the family discount, may do so by not making an application for a discount thereby enabling those fees to be used to support the wider school community.

c) Humanitarian entrant families - fees waived for three years:

It is the expectation of the Archbishop of Hobart that Archdiocesan and Religious Institute schools waive all school fees for Humanitarian Entrant students for a period of 3 years (post enrolment in CET) as a demonstration of our commitment as a system to the principles of social justice and to our Catholic mission. Accordingly, no invoices for school fees are to be sent to families during this period of time.

Please note that financial support is provided to schools for:

- Uniform costs – a subsidy is provided to assist with some of the initial uniform costs.
- Interpreter fees (for enrolment meetings only).
- Funding to support the first four years of the students enrolment in Tasmanian Catholic Schools.

If a family has entered Australia as a Humanitarian Entrant, they will hold the appropriate visa. It is recognised by Catholic Education Tasmania that Humanitarian Entrants are extremely marginalised and disadvantaged in our society. These families, unlike many others who may be suffering from financial hardship, struggle to improve their financial circumstances, even after 5 years in Australia. Many are also faced with long term complex medical and mental health needs. Once the three year period of the waiving of fees has expired, schools are required to carefully and pastorally assess the need to treat these Humanitarian Families as deserving of fee assistance because of continuing financial hardship.

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A Humanitarian Entrant's family would hold a humanitarian visa, which is issued by the Australian Government under The Refugees Convention. The Refugees Convention defines a refugee as a person:

- that is outside their country of origin or residence
- who is unable, or unwilling to return to their country of origin because of a legitimate fear of persecution regarding their race, religion, nationality, group membership, or a political belief
- who is not a war criminal, and has not committed any serious non-political crime.

For humanitarian entrants, the types of visas available are:

- Refugee Visa (Subclass 200).
- In-country Special Humanitarian Program Visa (Subclass 201).
- Global Special Humanitarian Program Visa ("SHP") (Subclass 202).
- Emergency Rescue Visa (Subclass 203).
- Woman at Risk Visa (Subclass 204).

It should be noted:

If a family holds a 500 class visa (a visa granted to a parent / family for the sole purpose of study in Australia) they are NOT Humanitarian Entrants. Before families are granted this type of visa the Department of Home Affairs asks them to show financial evidence that they are able to support themselves and all dependents for the cost of their own course of study, their children's education, together with normal living expenses.

d) Fee remissions for families in financial hardship

Financial hardship is when a family is willing but unable to meet their contractual fee obligations. It is assessed on total family income with reference to the Henderson Poverty Lines.

In all cases families will be treated with respect throughout the confidential fee remission process in order to maintain their dignity during difficult discussions and disclosures where compassion, fairness and justice are the objective.

In calculating the applicable fee remission, any family discount applied will be taken into account and the remission percentage will be applied against the full fee amount (Refer to the Fee Remission Table).

In cases of genuine hardship fee remissions may be given. At an interview with the Principal, or delegate, the family will need to provide details of their financial position by completing the Application for Fees Assistance Form (copy available from the School). In order for the form to be processed by the school, all documents requested are to be provided.

Fee remissions must be approved by the Principal or their delegate. Shared Funded Schools may establish a Fees Committee to assist the Principal, and the membership depending on school context, may include the Principal, a School Board Member, the school Business Manager/Finance Officer and the Parish Priest.

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The Fees Committee will consider all requests for fee remissions in the strictest confidence. The Principal or Fees Committee may report to the school Board without disclosing the names of applicants for fee remissions.

Fee remissions normally only apply in the year they are granted and are to be reviewed annually. Any variation to fees by way of remission, will be reassessed on application at the commencement of each year. School Principals will need to ensure that processes are in place to review variations annually.

Acceptance into extra-curricular activities outside the mainstream educational program may be compromised if school fee obligations have not been met once the fee remission has been quantified and the reduced fee payments established.

A separate application form needs to be lodged at each school or college where the family wishes to be considered for fee remission. For multiple schools, a single form can be completed and photocopied or scanned and provided to each school to reduce the administrative burden on families. As this policy applies across all Catholic schools and colleges in Tasmania, the same approach to fee assistance will be applied.

The Principal, or delegate, may approve a remission, or determine that a family is not eligible for a remission. The Principal, or delegate, may also extend the time over which the school will accept the payment of outstanding fees.

The Principal, or delegate, will use the application forms and remission recommendations that form part of this policy in order to promote equitable and fair treatment within the Tasmanian Catholic education sector and to provide consistent and standardised remission processes across all schools and colleges.

If families feel that this policy has not been applied correctly, according to their circumstances, they have the right to a review that will be completed by the Manager Finance at the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office. If a further and final review is requested, the matter will be determined by the Director Corporate.

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Appendix 1:

Eligible Concession Cards

The following Concession Cards automatically attract the maximum fee remission:

- New Start Allowance (NSA,NS, NA, SA)
- Job Seeker Payment (JSP/JS)
- Sickness Allowance (SA)
- Youth Allowance (YA)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study (AB)
- Austudy (AU)
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
- Partner Allowance (PA)
- Parenting Payment Single (PPS)
- Parenting Payment (partnered) (PP,PPP)
- Bereavement allowance (BA)
- Special Benefit (SpB, SL)
- Carer Payment (CP/CAR)
- Family Tax Benefit Part A (max rate) (FTB)
- Farm Household Allowance (LHS, FH)
- Low Income Health Care Card (LI/LIC)
- Family Tax Benefit (FA)
- Disability Support Pension (DSP) Single

Please be aware that the following Concession Cards do not attract an automatic remission as they are either not means tested or tested at a significantly higher level of income:

- Foster Child Health Care Cards (FO)
- Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card (CA,EH)
- Mobility Allowance (MOB)
- Carer Allowance caring for a child under 16 years (CA)
- Child with Disability (CD)
- Aged Pension (AP)
- Disability Support Pension (DSP) couple
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card (SHC)

The codes in brackets above are identified on the bottom of the Concession Card as the payment type.

If families do not have an eligible concession card, they are still able to apply for Fee Assistance and would need to complete an Application for Fees Assistance Form (copy available from the School).