



FEE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

A. Fee Setting Procedures

St Columba's College Finance Committee reviews the fee schedule and recommends changes each year, as part of the annual budget process. In general, the setting of annual fee increases will be reflective of the Educational Services CPI. Special subject and Extra Curricular fees are commensurate with the charges by external providers/suppliers and are set annually to cover the overall costs of the activity.

St Columba's College Board considers the recommendations of the Finance Committee on Annual Tuition Fees for the succeeding year. The Board is responsible for the final decision regarding the College annual budget, from which fee levels are calculated.

In November each year, following the Board's approval of the College annual budget, parents will receive advice of the fee levels for the succeeding year.

B. Fee Scheduling and Collection

Two key principles will be kept in mind when dealing with fee collection issues:

1. Compassion will govern situations where a genuine inability exists to pay all or part of fees.
2. Students should not be penalised for the decisions that parents or guardians make in relation to the payment of fees.

The Business Manager, on behalf of the College, administers the billing and collection of fees in accordance with the following fee categories and timelines:

Enrolment Fees

- The **Application Fee** is payable upon completion of the College enrolment form.
- The **Enrolment Fee** is payable on acceptance of an enrolment offer. The Enrolment Fee is non refundable. The **Family Deposit Fee** is payable on acceptance of an enrolment offer. This fee is incurred only once, irrespective of the number of family members attending the College concurrently. If the family member(s) remains at the College for six years, the fee is refunded in the March following the departure of the last member of the family who has completed year 12. The amount of the refund will be reduced by any outstanding fees owed by the family.

Annual Fees

- The **Annual Tuition Fee** is invoiced early in February via an *Annual Statement*. The fee charged is payable, as a minimum, in three equal instalments – February, May and September – with a range of payment options and alternative timelines possible (see 'Payment Options' below). If the annual fees are paid in full by the specified date detailed in the Annual Statement early payment discount will be granted. The amount of the early payment discount will be listed on the Annual Fees Statement for each year.

Additional Fees

- Accounts for VET **Special Subjects Fees** are issued separately and are payable within 14 days of the Tax Invoice being issued.
- Collection of **Extra Curricular activity fees** vary according to the activity undertaken.

Private Music Tuition

This fee is charged per term and for students to participate when registering, families are required to nominate one of the College's preferred methods of payment, i.e. direct debit or credit card scheduling, to enable the full fee to be deducted from the elected bank account or credit card at the beginning of each term. The registration sheet must have a nominated payment plan attached.

Private Dance Tuition

This fee is charged per semester and is collected on behalf of Linda Henderson Dance School (LHD). When registering, families are required to nominate one of the College's preferred methods of payment, i.e. direct debit or credit card scheduling, to enable the full fee to be deducted from the elected bank account or credit card at the beginning of each semester. The registration sheet must have a nominated payment plan attached.

In the situation where Annual Tuition Fees are outstanding for any student, the College reserves the right to withdraw the student from extra curricular activities until the family account is brought up to date. Should the activity run after the due date of the final minimum instalment (September) the account must be paid in full before the student can participate in the activity. Any other payment arrangement is at the discretion of the Principal.

C. Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund (CSEF)

Parents who hold a Health Care Card or approved Government concession cards are asked to complete a CSEF application. If approved, the grant is paid directly to St Columba's College and credited to the student's annual fee. The College expects that any eligible parent will apply for the CSEF in time and in accordance with the requirements of the Government agency administering the fund.

D. Payment Arrangements and Options

Enrolment Fees

The College reserves the right to nominate the preferred method of payment for the collection of all enrolment fees payable to the College at the time they are due.

Annual Tuition Fees

The College's expectation is that the Annual Tuition Fees will be paid, at a minimum, in three equal instalments – February, May and September – with a cut-off date for an early payment discount specified on the *Annual Statement* (usually the end of February).

It is a College requirement that all Annual Tuition Fees are paid by a nominated payment plan. Parents/legal guardians will be requested to specify their preferred method of payment and the timing of these payments from the choices offered by the College.

Option 1 - Payment in full

Should parents/legal guardians choose to pay the Annual Tuition Fees in full, to take advantage of the early payment discount offered, payment can be made by Credit Card or Direct Debit or a Cheque drawn in favour of "St Columba's College Ltd".

If the payment in advance of more than 1 years Annual Tuition fees is sought, a multi-year advance payment fee discount will be negotiated with the Business Manager.

Option 2 - Payment by instalments

If parents/legal guardians require an instalment plan for the payment of the Annual Tuition Fees, the College will schedule deductions on their behalf from their nominated account.

Methods of payments available are:

- Direct Debit – only from a nominated savings/cheque account.
- Credit Card – MasterCard or Visa only accepted.

The timing of payments offered by the College to parents/legal guardians for these deductions are:

- 10 monthly instalments from February till November - Direct Debit
- 10 monthly instalments from March till December - Credit Card
- 3 instalments in the months of February, May and September.

Payment Option Forms

The parent/legal guardian's choice of payment will be recorded via the *Payment Option Form* that is forwarded to families. This form needs to be completed in full, signed and returned to the College to enable the processing of payments. The arrangement will remain in place unless otherwise advised.

Alternative payment schedules that extend beyond the normal billing cycle can be negotiated with the Business Manager only where special circumstances exist (refer to the appendix).

Additional Fees

The College reserves the right to nominate the preferred method of payment for the collection of all additional fees payable to the College at the time they are due.

E. Fee Reductions – Special Circumstances

Fee reductions may be available in circumstances that include:

- Families experiencing financial difficulties
- Absence of a student due to extended illness – longer than a term
- Withdrawal of a student during the year for pastoral reasons
- Variations to fulltime enrolment (less than 75% of a typical student program)
- Approved long-term absence
- Student enrolments during the school year.

St Columba's College's expectations and commitments in relation to these matters, and procedures to be followed by parents/legal guardians who seek fee reductions are outlined in the Appendix to this guideline.

The Principal is the arbitrator of the boundaries under which the above circumstances are applied.

F. Recovery of Outstanding Debts

The College would prefer parents/legal guardians to initiate first contact with the College when family accounts are in arrears. Contact should be made with the Business Manager to discuss options that may be available to the family. Otherwise, when an account is in arrears, the College will make contact by reminder statements, letter and/or telephone.

If there is no satisfactory response to reminders for payment, the parents/legal guardians will be expected to attend a meeting at the College with the Principal and/or Business Manager to resolve the matter.

Where past fees and levies are assigned to one party, other than as a result of a court order of which the College is party to, this assignment does not remove the right of the College to seek payment from any party who was responsible for the payment of fees and levies at the time the charge was incurred.

Non payment of school fees will not place a student's ongoing enrolment in jeopardy. In the absence of a response to communications from the College the matter will be forwarded to a debt collection agency. A fee of 10% will be added to the outstanding balance to cover the cost of collection.

Legal processes may be used to recover money owing if all other collection procedures fail. The College reserves the right to recover legal costs incurred in the course of recovering outstanding fees.

Should Annual Tuition Fees be outstanding for any student, the College reserves the right to withdraw the student from extra curricular activities or withhold tickets for any College activities until the family account is brought up to date. Should the activity run after the due date of the final minimum instalment (September) the account must be paid in full for the student or family to participate. Any other payment arrangement other than in full is at the discretion of the Principal.

G. School and Family Obligations and Agreements

At the time of acceptance of enrolment, a student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will sign the Enrolment Acceptance Form that incorporates obligations and agreements about the payment in full of all fees. Each signatory to the Enrolment Application Form, and/or subsequent re-enrolment forms, will be solely or jointly responsible for the timely payment of fees.

New enrolment - Sibling. Any outstanding College fees applicable to the family must be finalised before any new enrolments for siblings can proceed.

H. Change of Parental and Family Status

If family and parental/legal guardian arrangements alter, and the liability for the payment of fees changes from one party to another, either during the course of the student's enrolment or after she has left the College, each party is expected to notify the College so that a new Agreement can be made. A form is available from the Business Manager on request. The document must clearly indicate the change in liability for the payment of fees and the commencement date of this change in liability. If the College does not receive a mutually accepted agreement from the parties involved, the original signatories to the enrolment and subsequent re-enrolment forms will be jointly held liable for all debts incurred.

Related Policies and Documents

St Columba's College - *Fee Policy*

St Columba's College - *Enrolment Policy*

Catholic Education Melbourne Policy 2.4, *Enrolment for Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Catholic Education Melbourne Policy 2.27, *School Fees* www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au

Appendix

Fee Reductions

Special Circumstances and Application Procedures

In certain circumstances families may apply for a pro-rata reduction in fees. Such circumstances, the reductions that may apply, and the procedures to be followed are outlined below.

Special Circumstances

a) Families experiencing financial difficulties

Where hardship is encountered, parents/legal guardians are to complete an **Application for Reduction in Annual Tuition Fees** form, available from the Business Manager.

The completed form needs to outline the circumstances of the financial hardship and include sufficient detail of the family's financial position to justify the application. Receipt of the application will be acknowledged by a letter from the College.

Families can be assured that their application will be considered with high levels of confidentiality, sensitivity and care. The College's response to requests of this nature will be at the discretion of the Principal and the College's Finance Committee (where appropriate) on the understanding that the arrangements will be negotiated annually and the financial situation of the family updated annually.

b) Absence of a student due to extended illness

Where a student is absent from school for a term or more due to prolonged illness or injury, some form of fee reduction may apply. The level of reduction will be determined by a number of factors including the length of absence, the nature and level of ongoing support provided by St Columba's College for the student's ongoing learning and wellbeing. All requests for fee reduction due to such circumstances must be made in writing to the Principal. Cases will be considered on an individual basis.

c) Withdrawal of a student during the year

Parents/legal guardians may apply for a reduction in their fees if they withdraw their daughter from the school. If pastoral reasons underpin the withdrawal, pro-rata reductions may apply. For all other reasons (e.g. family relocation), pro-rata reductions may be limited to a maximum of 50% of the annual tuition fee. Parents/legal guardians are expected to give the equivalent of one term's notice, in writing to the Principal, to avoid any additional administration charges.

d) Variations to fulltime enrolment

A student whose learning program is less than 75% of a typical student program and may therefore be considered as a part time student and as such may be entitled to some reduction of fees. The level of reduction will be determined on an individual basis and takes account of the level of part-time status, the number of days attended and the level of support required by the College. Requests for fee reductions in such circumstances must be made in writing to the Principal.

Long-term leave of absence

For students who will be absent for two terms or more, with an expected year of return, a place will be held over provided the parents legal guardians provide a minimum of one term's notice in writing to the Principal. The family account will need to be paid in full before St Columba's College agrees to hold open the student's place. Any fee rebate will be limited to a maximum of 50% of the annual tuition fee, and a holding deposit of \$750 will be requested from the family. The deposit is non-refundable but will be credited towards any future fees.

St Columba's College will generally not offer any fee remission to families in the case of extended overseas travel except where a student is on an approved exchange program.

e) Student enrolments during the school year

Families who enrol a student during the school year will be charged on a pro-rata basis. However, the Application Fee, Enrolment Fee and Family Deposit Fee deposit will need to be paid in full prior to the student commencing at St Columba's College.