



## School Fees and Levies Policy

### Policy Statement

At Mater Dei Catholic Primary School, we value high quality, inclusive catholic schooling and believe that the education and development of our children is enhanced when our staff, students and parents/caregivers coexist in positive, collaborative relationships of shared responsibility.

We actively encourage and facilitate the involvement and participation of parents/caregivers in the education of their children, to work closely and cooperatively with the parish, support our staff to foster a culture of teaching excellence, encourage our students to be active learners and develop the ability to be effective and productive members of their immediate and broader communities.

### Rationale and Guiding Principles

The purpose of this policy is to provide all members of the school community with information regarding Fees and Levies.

School Fees are reviewed annually by the Principal in consultation with advice provided by Brisbane Catholic Education. Fees are a main source of income for the school to assist in supplementing government funding and to ensure that the financial commitments and operating costs of the school are met.

In accepting enrolment, all parents are considered to be giving a firm undertaking that they accept and support the life, nature and identity of Mater Dei Catholic Primary School, which includes a legal commitment to the payment of fees. Fees and Levies collected at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School are used for the following purposes:

- Provide teaching, administrative, classroom support and facilities
- Provide essential resources, materials, facilities and equipment
- Assist with providing excursion activities
- Support the school building program
- Maintain buildings, grounds and other facilities

It is a matter of justice to all that every family makes a fair contribution to the financial obligation of our school. For those families experiencing short or long-term genuine inability to pay fees, we are committed to providing support to ensure that enrolment is not compromised.

## School Fee and Levy Collection Process

### Acceptance of Enrolment Fee

When parents return the Confirmation of Enrolment form, the Acceptance Fee is required to be paid to secure a place at the school. This fee comprises a non-refundable administration charge, together with an amount that is deducted from the first term school fees. Should the student not proceed with the enrolment, this entire fee is forfeited.

### Procedures for the collection of Fees and Levies is as follow:

1. **Issuing of Accounts** – School Fees are issued each term, via email and in accordance with the school fees schedule (as per our website). It is the fee payer's responsibility to ensure email billing details are kept up to date. Payment of the account is due within 14 days from the date of issue. The due date is shown on the account.
2. **Method of Payment** – A variety of payment plans are available for the payment of fees and levies. Instructions on how to pay are included at the bottom of each fee statement.
  - BPAY – payable on invoice once per term
  - Credit Card (Mastercard and Visa) – online payment via the school portal BPOINT facility or at the school office.
  - Direct Debit from your bank account or credit card at intervals nominated by the fee payer (monthly, fortnightly, weekly). Forms are available online from the parent portal or at the school office. Forms completed for the 2020 school year will be ongoing to the end of Year 6 for your child. Notification will be sent to Fee payers to advise any change to Direct Debit amounts once Fees are confirmed for the new school year. Commencement dates will also be notified to Fee payers.
  - Cash is not to be sent to school with students for payment of fees but will be accepted at the front counter.
3. **Payment Difficulties** – Where a parent/guardian believes that financial circumstances have arisen that will prevent the payment of their school fee account by the due date, a variety of options are available:
  - Extension of time – If an extension is required, please contact the school finance office prior to the due date.
  - Payment Plans – Payment of the school fee account by regular instalments. All payment plans must ensure that the account is cleared by the last day of the school year or as negotiated with the Principal or Finance Secretary.
  - Fee Concessions – In cases of financial hardship, an application may be made for a fee concession. Concession applications are accepted at the commencement of each year or at any point initiated by the family. Concessions are issued for a maximum period of 12 months within a calendar year. Consideration for a subsequent period will require lodgement of a new application. A compassionate and just approach under the missions and values of Brisbane Catholic Education and Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is used when reviewing applications. This same process is adopted by all BCE schools for assessing eligibility, which is based on financial need or extenuating circumstances. All matters are dealt with on a confidential basis.

- 4. Unpaid fees** – All overdue accounts will be investigated using the following procedures
- Where a payment plan or other arrangement is not in place, a reminder statement will be issued to families who have not settled their school fee account by the due date.
  - If payment or a suitable response is not received with 14 days of the reminder statement, contact with the fee payer will be made via telephone, or email. Mutually beneficial repayment options will be considered.
  - If a satisfactory arrangement has still not been reached after this follow up, the account may reluctantly be sent to the school's Debt Collection agency. In serious cases where there is clear capacity to pay outstanding fees, legal options may be pursued by the school.
  - Legal costs, direct debit rejection fees and any debt collection costs or other costs incurred will be at the fee payer's expense.

**Agreed Payment Plans:**

Our school offers families the opportunity of paying the school fee account by regular instalments over the course of the year. All agreed payment plans must be organised to include a regular schedule that will clear the school fee and levy account by the end of November of the school year. Any extensions of the agreed payment plan must be negotiated with the Principal and/or Finance Secretary. To establish an Agreed Payment Plan, forms are available on the school website/Parent portal or from the school finance office.

**Late Start Enrolment:**

New students entering Mater Dei Catholic Primary School after the commencement of term may be charged on a pro-rata basis for the remaining weeks of the term where appropriate at the Principal's discretion.

**Withdrawal of Enrolment:**

Withdrawal of enrolment refers to a student enrolment concluding before the end of Year 6, including during the term.

- Written notification to the Principal is required with at least one month's notice if the enrolment is concluded mid-term
- At the discretion of the Principal, an adjustment to the fee account for the number of weeks the student does not attend may be made.
- If fees are still owing at the time of departure, they will be forwarded on to our Debt Collection Agency. If, however a refund is due, a direct credit to the customer's bank account will be arranged.
- All departing students are required to return any library books, laptops, accessories, items belonging to the school, prior to concluding their enrolment.

**Extended Leave / Holding an Enrolment Place:**

Fees will be payable for the whole term in which extended leave is taken. For a reduction in fees, a written request must be made to the Principal at the time of notification and may be granted at the Principal's discretion. Consideration will be given to the length of the break, the nature of the leave, the time the student has been at school, the number of previous leave occurrences, and the existence of student waiting lists.

For further clarification regarding the above School Fee and Levy collection process, please contact the School Finance Office.