



**ST BERNARD'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
UPPER MT GRAVATT**

St Bernard's Catholic school, founded by the Sisters of St Joseph, shares in the educational mission of the church as part of St Bernard's Parish

**SCHOOL FEES and LEVIES
POLICY and PROCEDURES**

STATEMENT

St Bernard's Catholic School community is committed to offering a Catholic education to all children whose parents/carers desire it. St Bernard's Catholic School is guided by the traditions of the Sisters of St Joseph and its Vision and Mission Statement in determining financial arrangement related to student enrolments. The school is committed to exploring all reasonable means of containing fees, levies and charges on parents/carers so as to maintain its inclusivity and diversity.

St Bernard's aims to provide a quality education to all students, and for this to be achieved, fees and levies are charged. It is an expectation that all families who enrol at the school will invest financially in the education of their child.

Rationale

The acceptance by parents/carers of an enrolment offer on behalf of their child in St Bernard's Catholic School indicates a commitment to pay fees and levies in full. The school is aware that, from time to time, some parents/carers find themselves in financial difficulties. Compassion and support extended to families in need are integral to the philosophy of St Bernard's Catholic School.

Guiding Principles

Fees and levies (including tuition fees, levies and other charges that may be applied in relation to participation in activities, such as camps and health and physical education activities) are revised annually in line with the recommendation of Brisbane Catholic Education and endorsed by the Parish Finance Council. These fees and levies are collected at St Bernard's School for the following purposes which are aligned to the school's Vision and Mission Statement:

- Provide teaching, administrative, classroom and facilities support
- Provide essential resources, materials, facilities and equipment
- Maintain building, grounds and other facilities
- Provide new building and grounds enhancements and support of St Bernard's School building debt.

The Parents and Friends Association also collects a levy through St Bernard's School fee structure. A copy of the current Fee and Levy Schedule is included in pamphlet form with the Enrolment Acceptance package.

It is appreciated that changing family circumstances will sometimes require that a child transfer to another school. Fees and levies will be payable for the whole of the month in which the enrolment is terminated.

Fee concessions may be considered in cases where children have already enrolled and/or where financial circumstances have subsequently changed in such a manner as to make fee and/or levy adjustments necessary.

OUR VISION

Learning is child-centred, where children are prepared as life-long learners to meet challenges as compassionate Christian members of our community.

OUR MISSION

- To develop and nurture an environment where children learn about themselves, their world and God:
- By working in partnership with families, staff and the parish community
 - By valuing the diversity of all members of our community
 - By experiencing and living a Christian life in the Catholic faith.



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With this in mind, the aim of St Bernard's Catholic School is that no Catholic child will be denied a place in the school due to parents/carers' genuine inability to pay full fees and levies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Annual school fees and levy charges will be endorsed by the School Board and ratified by the Parish Finance with regard to Brisbane Catholic Education recommendations.

The Principal will be responsible for the setting and distribution of accounts and the collection of monies with administrative procedures carried out by the Financial Secretary. Consultation with all relevant parties will be an integral part of setting and adopting the annual charges.

PROCEDURES

Application Fee:

A non-refundable application fee of \$55 is payable on submission of an enrolment application for student admission.

A non-refundable acceptance fee of \$100 is payable within 14 days of an enrolment offer for a place for a student. This money will be credited to the first month fee of the student on commencement at St Bernard's.

Payment of Accounts:

- The school will issue an account of full fees and levies at the beginning of each month for 10 months from February to November and payable within 10 days. Accounts are forwarded monthly by email to the email address provided by parents/carers
- Any arrangements to vary the terms of payment must be made with the Principal. The agreed-upon arrangements will be placed in writing and require the signature of both the Principal and the payee.
- Payment of school fees can be made by Direct Debit (preferred by the school), EFTPOS, BPay, credit card, cheque or cash.

Overdue Accounts:

- Reminders for outstanding fees will be forwarded two (2) weeks after the due date by email
- Accounts that remain unpaid will be treated as per Non-Payment of Accounts procedures
- If a genuine difficulty arises and an account cannot be paid by the due date discussions need to occur with the Principal regarding an extension of time for payment
- Information regarding outstanding amounts may be passed to other Brisbane Catholic Education schools or colleges if requested.

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The deliberate non-payment of fees, where there is clear evidence of capacity to pay, will result in the initiation of a process to assist in the collection of the debt owing and, in serious cases, legal options will be pursued by the school. Special concessions are available for families experiencing genuine financial hardship. These can be accessed by contacting the school.

Non-Payment of Accounts:

The following process will be used to collect outstanding fees:

- Step 1 - Letter – a reminder signed by the Principal
- Step 2 - A follow-up letter signed by Principal with a Direct Debit form attached
- Step 3 - Phone call checking on receipt of letter
- Step 4 - Letter re debt collection implications and extra costs incurred by family
- Step 5 - Matter passed to debt collection agency (Charter Mercantile currently used)

Concessions:

- Families wishing to apply for concessional fees due to genuine hardship should do so on the form “Application for Concessional Fees” obtainable from the financial secretary
- Families requesting concessions must provide evidence of household gross income, tax and housing costs. Pay slips and Centrelink statements are acceptable evidence of income, and rental receipts or financial institution statements and rate notices as evidence of housing costs
- An interview must take place with the Principal to discuss the matter
- The application and interview process is aimed at determining a just and equitable fee which is within the family's ability to pay
- No allowance is made for repayments on such items as holiday houses, investment property, pools, new cars, etc
- Once a fee concession is granted it is essential that this commitment is honoured in full and on time. If family circumstances change the school must be informed
- If a concession is required beyond the current year new arrangements must be negotiated each school year
- The school is willing to arrange different methods of payment to assist the family
- Unless prior arrangements have been made the school expects that fees will be paid by the due date. If a problem arises in meeting this deadline a meeting must be organised with the Principal
- Fee concessions are means tested in line with Federal Government Poverty Guidelines – Henderson Poverty Line
- No concessions are granted where the student is participating in extra-curricular activities, such as instrumental band
- Any concessional fee arrangements may be reviewed by the Parish Priest.

Students Leaving the School and Refunds:

When a student leaves the school during a school term written notification is required. All library books, laptops, and accessories are to be returned to the school. Students exiting the school after the commencement of a term will be charged for the number of months in which the enrolment is terminated.

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Exited families must settle any outstanding fees within four weeks of leaving the school unless a payment arrangement has been negotiated and approved by the Principal.
If a refund is due for overpaid fees a direct credit to a bank account or a cheque will be arranged.
All other refunds or adjustments will be at the discretion of the Principal.

DESIRED PROCEDURES

With the school endeavouring to yearly maintain a balanced budget it is a matter of justice that all families commit to paying school fees and honour that commitment by ensuring all school fee payments are up-to-date.

As the level of school fees is kept to a minimum amount, with regard to student numbers and required financial commitments of the school, it is essential that all fees are paid in a timely manner. With school fees (tuition, levies and charges) paid on time the school will meet its financial obligations while supporting the resourcing of teaching and learning activities and staying within its means.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

St Bernard's Catholic School Vision and Mission Statement
Annual School Budget as endorsed by the School Board and Parish Finance Council
Strategic Renewal Plan 2017 – 2020
Collaborating for Mission: The Parish and The Catholic School

REVIEW

This Policy and Procedures document will be reviewed as required or as Brisbane Catholic Education requirements and/or guidelines change.

Endorsement

The St Bernard's Catholic School Board, in conjunction with the school staff, and parent and parish community, endorses this policy and procedures. April 2018

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