



FEE PAYMENT & COLLECTION Policy

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2. Vision Statement

Guided by our Catholic Identity, St Brigid's College ensures high levels of learning and success for all.

3. Rationale

Fees for education in a Catholic school are an in-built component of the total funding of Catholic education. School fees are charges to assist in meeting the day-to-day operating costs of the school.

In recognition that Catholic schools do not attract the same level of recurrent funding from the Commonwealth and State Governments as other sectors, there is a requirement to raise private funds.

The major source of this private financial contribution is the school fee which may be supplemented with other contributions e.g. direct parish(s) contributions, fund raising activities and the use of voluntary helpers.

A Policy is required to clearly document the terms and conditions surrounding the issue of, the payment of, and ultimately the collection of (any unpaid) school fees.

A Policy will ensure transparency, consistency and fairness to all related parties. A Policy is also required to meet audit requirements and ensure that relative legal responsibilities are met.

4. Scope

This policy applies directly to the Administration (and more specifically finance) area of the College, and directly to the parent community.

5. Definition

This Fee Payment & Collection Policy applies to all/any fees applied by St Brigid's College to any student or family for any reason, including but not limited to Tuition Fees, Excursion costs, specific subject-related costs, external related costs, or any other direct or related costs that St Brigid's College has or will charge to any student/family prior to, during, or after their attendance at this College.

6. Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of St Brigid's College:

- to charge school fees in order to meet its financial needs
- to collect the school fees in a manner which is just and equitable.

7. Guiding Principles

1. The College will have the option of charging a family or student fee, and may offer a discount to families with multiple enrolments. The College may charge an all-encompassing fee which includes school fees, classroom levies and other charges.
2. When setting fees, the College will take into account its financial needs and the ability of the school community to meet the level of fees to be charged, keeping in mind the socio-economic level of the community. The socio-economic level is used when setting the fees as part of the budgeting process. The school budget reflects an accurate assessment of fee income after remissions, discounts, special concessions, have been excluded.
3. The College will aim to advise families, in the final term of the preceding year via newsletters, handbooks and/or other electronic media, of the schedule of fees for the coming year.

4. If any other recurrent fee e.g.; fundraising, maintenance, excursion, is charged at any time throughout the year, it shall be reported as part of the school fees collected in the Annual Financial Statement.
5. A classroom fee/subject levy may be charged on a per student basis to meet student classroom requisites and subject levies. All classroom fees and subject levies are reported in the Annual Financial Statement as compulsory tuition charges collected.
6. An enrolment/application fee may be charged. Refundable enrolment and application fees are later deducted from accounts to reduce the fees. Refundable enrolment and application fees are reported in the Annual Financial Statement as School fees. Non-refundable enrolment and application fees are recorded as such in the Annual Financial Statement.
7. Schools may enrol full fee paying overseas students. Receipts from full fee paying students are recorded in the Annual Financial Statement as either recurrent receipts from full fee paying overseas students or capital receipts from full fee paying overseas students. Schools cannot enrol Full Fee Paying Overseas Students (FFPOS) international students travelling on a student visa subclass 571 unless the school is registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).
8. Schools may charge a capital fee to cover capital expenditure i.e.: furniture, equipment, buildings and capital loan repayments. Schools may transfer their recurrent school fees as capital fees. All capital fees are reported in the Annual Financial Statement as fees for capital purposes. Amounts transferred reduce the recurrent school fees reported and increase the fees for capital purposes reported.
9. Fee remissions can be available to parents of students whose financial position indicates that they are unable to meet the recommended fee. Information on fee remission procedures are contained in parent handbooks and/or promotional material. When dealing with requests for fee remissions, schools proceed with the utmost discretion ensuring confidentiality at all times. Approval of fee relief is restricted to Canonical Administrator and/or Principal. Parents making formal request for remission of fees must support their application with sufficient personal financial information to enable an informed decision to be made (Refer **Appendix 2**). A copy of the authorised approval for fee remissions is retained on file.
10. Fee statements shall be issued no later than one month after the commencement of each year and are issued on a regular basis thereafter – usually once per term. To assist parents with the payment of fees, the College will offer a range of payment options: cash, cheque, BPay and Direct Debit (weekly, fortnightly, monthly). The College will seek confirmation from each family at the end of the year prior, as to their preferred payment method (refer **Appendix 1**).
11. The College will regularly monitor school fee collection. The recovery of unpaid fees will be approached sensitively to protect all parties from public embarrassment. Unpaid fees are followed up promptly by letter or personal contact (see below for more specific details).
12. For families with fees long overdue for payment, the School Authority may employ the services of a debt collector and/or Solicitor to assist in recovering monies due, when in the judgement of the College, the parent/guardian can meet the payment but is unwilling to do so. Such action is to receive prior approval from the Canonical Administrator or his delegate, the Principal.

13. The institution of court proceedings to recover unpaid debts may only proceed after approval to do so has been sought and obtained from the Canonical Administrator and notification has been provided to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education.

8. Procedures

Procedures: General

- Fees and their payment should be discussed with parents at the time of enrolment.
- School Fees will be set in the year prior and Billed to families early in Term One of the 'current' year, with Fee Statements issued immediately upon completion of the Billing process.
- Quarterly statements are issued at the start of each Term and it is the obligation and responsibility of parents to contact the College if payments cannot be made by the due date:
 - o Due dates for payment of fees will be 31st March, or alternatively
 - o St Brigid's College offers monthly or fortnightly payment options with appropriate instalment amounts to clear the balance owing by end of the school year.
 - Instalments can be via Direct Debit (the school's preferred option), BPay, Centrepay deduction, Eftpos/Credit Card or by cash/cheque.
 - Payments established under the Direct Debit method will continue until a written request is received by the College to cancel or change, or until the last sibling has finished schooling at St Brigid's and all fees have been paid in full.
- Should a family fall into genuine hardship and as a result, find difficulty in meeting their scheduled fees, it is an obligation on that family to contact the College. A suitable disclosure and request form will be required as part of that process to enable the College to fairly assess the family's needs (Refer **Appendix 2**)
 - o This obligation for the family to contact the College should be met before the account falls into arrears.

Procedures - Collection

- If the College fees have not been paid in full by 31st March, OR in the absence of a scheduled repayment plan, OR if the equivalent of one monthly or two fortnightly instalments are overdue, the family will be deemed to be 'in arrears' and a due 'collection' process will begin, as follows:
 - o Personal contact where possible (usually by phone) to seek a response as to why the account has fallen behind.
 - o Fee Letter 1: Initially, for those who fail to keep up with their commitments, the College will bring the matter to the family's attention promptly and politely, seeking a response. This letter will outline the account balance, the degree of arrears and remind parents of their obligation, and allow 14 days for a response.
 - o Fee Letter 2: Follow-up, should there be an unsatisfactory response to the first letter. This letter will refer to the previous correspondence, confirm the level of arrears, seek an interview at the school to establish a suitable repayment program, and outline alternate actions if there is no response within 14 days.
 - o Fee Letter 3: Final letter, should there be an unsatisfactory outcome from the first 2 letters. This letter will refer to any prior correspondence, the balance of the account, and advice that the account will be placed in the hands of a debt collector/solicitor to recover full fees (plus costs), should there be no response within 14 days.
 - o File presented to the Finance Committee for consideration and decision on:
 - a) any write-off
 - b) If file is to be placed in the hands of a debt collector/solicitor, including the prior approval of the Canonical Administrator (or delegate).
This step could occur at any stage, with single or repeat discussions necessary.

- As a final step, court proceedings may be initiated, following approval from the Canonical Administrator and the Director of Catholic Education.
- The above process will be conducted by the Business Manager (or delegate) in a sensitive, discreet and confidential matter.

Procedures – Early Exit

Should a student exit the College during the College year, pro-rata tuition fees will be payable. Subject to all other matters being in order across the College, a fee rebate may be applied as follows:

1. If a student exits within the first month, a rebate equivalent to 9/10ths of the Tuition Fee, Core Subject Levy (less the cost of any camp already attended) and Capital levy may apply, or
2. If a student exits after the first month but before the end of Term III, a rebate equivalent to the number of whole 'Term' weeks remaining up to the end of Term 3 only divided by the total number of Term weeks for the year (normally 41) may apply, or
3. If a student exits at any time during Term IV, there will be no rebate.
4. If a student exits at any time in their first year at St Brigid's College, then Clause 2 of the 'Electronic Device User Agreement' will also apply.

Procedures – Outstanding Fees

Should there be outstanding fees (after any applicable rebate has been applied) at time of exit from the College, the student exit form will be noted accordingly and a commitment required by the family to clear the arrears in full or under an agreed repayment program.

Should payments in favour of such an agreement fall into arrears, the College will issue a final letter allowing 14 days for payment or the file will be referred to Collection Agency or Solicitor to seek recovery in full (including all recovery costs).

Should a family seek to enrol or re-enrol a student(s) whilst their family account remains in arrears, the College may refuse enrolment until such arrears are cleared.

9. Responsibilities

Insert content here

10. Legal References

Federal and relevant State laws bind the School and its employees. A breach of this policy may result in the School and/or its employees breaching any one of the following pieces of legislation:

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth);	Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth);
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth);	Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)	Child Safe Standards (Ministerial Order 870)
Education and Training Reform Act 2006	

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of the relevant legislation.

11. Related Policies and documents

- Enrolment Policy
- Debtor Provisioning Policy
- Electronic Device User Agreement

- Other reference: School Fees Policy – CEOB Nov 2012

12. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Example of the “Compulsory Declaration Form”
- Appendix 2: Copy of the “School Fees Consideration – Disclosure & Request Form”

13. Document Review

Prepared: Jun 2014	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Updated:	May 2015	Included Collection procedures. Added reference to re-enrolment
Updated:	April 2017	Layout updated, etc.. Reviewed consistency with Diocesan Guidelines.
Updated:	Feb 2020	Reviewed – no changes
	Jul 2022	Reviewed – no changes
Due for Review:	March 2025	

Sample Doc. To be returned to the school byOffice Use Only.
Ref: No.

ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

FEE PAYMENTS FOR 20__

PARENT'S NAME (1): _____

PARENT'S NAME (2): _____

STUDENT'S NAME (1): _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

School Fee Accounts are processed and emailed in early February for the full year's fees. Payment of School Fees is available under 3 options. Please indicate below the option and payment method you will use.

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| PAYMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fortnightly (Thursdays) Direct Debit: based on 1/20 th of the full year's fees. |
| OPTIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> | Monthly Direct Debit (5th of each month): based on 1/10 th of full fee |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Annually in advance: payable by 31 March |

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| PAYMENT METHOD | <input type="checkbox"/> | DIRECT DEBIT: Form attached – This is the School's preferred payment method |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | CENTREPAY: Forms are available from the School Office |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | BPAY: Biller Code (No. 616219) and Ref: number is on each statement |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | CASH/CHEQUE: Payment made with account statement direct to school. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | EFTPOS: Visa/MasterCard and Debit card can be accepted at the school |

- We would like to request an appointment to discuss the possibility of making other arrangements with regard to the payment of School Fees.

I/We, the undersigned, agree to pay the approved school fees each year and understand the obligation of two or more fee payers to pay the approved fees is joint and several for 100% of the fees, unless otherwise agreed with the College. I/We also understand the agreement to pay the approved fees is intended to be legally binding on me/us and not released by any time or forbearance given or granted by the College.

Parent 1 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent 2 Signature: _____ Date: _____



SCHOOL FEES CONSIDERATION - DISCLOSURE AND REQUEST FORM

PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY PRIOR TO COMPLETING

This application is an acknowledgement that not all parents seeking a Catholic education for their children are able to meet the full level of school fees. At the same time, the College is aware that it has a responsibility in justice to those people managing to pay full fees and that it handles any variation to the fees charged, within a policy that is fair and equitable. There is always some intrusiveness in this process, deemed necessary to achieve this fair and equitable resolution.

The College retains the right to make decisions regarding the appropriate level of consideration to the fees charged. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide appropriate documentary proof. The College cannot consider an application for a fee variation where the necessary documentation is not provided or there is not full disclosure of the individual circumstances.

The College will assess your application to determine if any level of assistance is warranted. The College will then decide on the appropriate consideration that would assist you in your ability to service the balance of fees owed.

It must be stressed that recognition of a variation to fees in prior years does not guarantee a variation for subsequent years. The variation for fee relief is for a specified period with a maximum term of one year. If your circumstances have not improved, you can submit a new application for further consideration.

It is important that you fully familiarise yourself with all the terms and conditions set out in this application. It is an express condition of this application that confidentiality is maintained at all times. Any discussion regarding the variation to fees is strictly between the family concerned and the College Principal or Business\Assistant Business Manager.

If for any reason you cannot return the form within two weeks of the issue date, please contact me directly. Should you fail to return this form within the specified period it will be deemed that your financial circumstances have changed and that a variation to the fees is not required.

Mr. Gerard Raven
College Principal

Terms and Conditions for Variation to Fee Application

The following terms and conditions apply to all applications requesting a consideration to the fees charged. Your assistance in providing full information will allow us to determine a fair and equitable assessment of your application.

1. Families wishing to apply for a variation to their fees charged must complete this application form in full, including the FINANCIAL POSITION ASSESSMENT, Statement of Financial Position, and Income and Expenditure Statement.
2. This application must be signed by all parties responsible for school fees and returned with all necessary documentation attached. Failure to complete all sections, sign, or provide necessary documentation will result in your application being declined.
3. Parents requesting a variation to fees charged will be required to provide satisfactory evidence detailing the gross income of both parents or care givers, tax and housing costs. Pensions, including Overseas Pensions and Government Allowances such as Youth Allowance are to be included in income statements. The most recent taxation statement, pay slips and Centrelink statements are required as acceptable evidence of income, and rental receipts, bank or building society statements as evidence of housing costs.
4. Where the College is fully satisfied with the documentary evidence provided, a variation to fees charged may be granted without necessitating a further interview.
5. The application process is aimed at determining a just and equitable variation, which is within the family's ability to service the balance of fees owed.
6. No allowance is made for repayments on non-essential investments (e.g. Investment property, holiday houses, etc.) that are declared as financial commitments. Where a family so decides its priority is to encompass such extravagances, the burden of that decision remains with the family.
7. Any variation to fees charged is granted for a proportion of the Tuition Fees only. It does not cover other charges that may be incurred. Extra-curricular activities charged separately, such as Outdoor Ed, overseas and interstate trips are not made available to students where families are receiving a variation to fees charged.
8. Where an application for variation to fees charged is successful, the reduced fees charged must be met. If family financial circumstances improve, it is a requirement that the College will be informed immediately.
9. Where an application for variation to fees charged is successful, it is a condition that a direct debit form will be completed and returned to the Business Manager in order for the variation for fees to be applied. The revised amount of fees charged will then be payable by Fortnightly Direct Debit over the year in which they are charged, or a term otherwise agreed to by St Brigid's College.
10. The variation for fees charged is for a specified period with a one year limitation. If your circumstances have not improved, you are encouraged to submit a new application for further consideration by October 31.
11. Where an application for variation to fees charged is granted, any further variation necessary to the agreement would need to be stated in writing addressed to the Principal or Business Manager for consideration.
12. The School Fees policy is enforceable for all remaining fees to be serviced by those responsible for the payment of fees.
13. The statutory declaration which forms part of this application is to be signed by all parties responsible for the payment of fees.

Office Use Only.

FAMILY CODE: _____

ISSUE DATE: _____

FINANCIAL POSITION ASSESSMENT

The Financial Position Assessment is designed to determine the ability of families to service fees charged where a family is experiencing hardship and is unable to meet the full level of fees charged. The College will determine the level of variation to be applied to the fees charged upon assessment of the following information. This is further supported by the accompanying documentation required.

Please describe the specific problem\’s creating a burden on the family financial position?
 (Provide as much information as you can and attach separate sheet if necessary).

PARENT INFORMATION:

FATHER’S NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

SUBURB: _____ STATE: _____ P/C: _____

HOME TELEPHONE: _____ Mbl: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

MOTHER’S NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

SUBURB: _____ STATE: _____ P/C: _____

HOME TELEPHONE: _____ Mbl: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

**DETAILS OF OTHER DEPENDENT CHILDREN (NOT ATTENDING THIS COLLEGE)
 PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE FEE STATEMENT FOR EACH STUDENT.**

NAME	AGE	SCHOOL	ANNUAL FEES
1.			\$
2.			\$
3.			\$
4.			\$

Where possible, please list two references that may be relevant to this application.
 (e.g. Parish Priest \ Primary or previous Secondary School Principal and contact details)

.....

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO ACCOMPANY THIS APPLICATION

Please attach photocopies of the following documentation where applicable.
 (Do not send originals).

- Your Last Taxation Return and Assessment Notice.
- Your Last Payment Summary (if applicable) and your last three Pay Slips.
- Rental agreements (if any).
- Centrelink documentation i.e. Evidence of all Centrelink payments received.
- Copy of Loan Statements (Last 6 months)
- Copy of most recent Bank Statements (Savings & Investments)
- Any other document which may assist us to assess your application

DECLARATION BY ALL PARTIES RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT OF SCHOOL FEES

I /We acknowledge that the above information I/we have provided is to enable the College to consider my/our application for variation to the fees charged. I/We certify that the information provided by me/us in this document is true and correct and that nothing has been omitted which would lead the College to make an incorrect assessment.

I/We hereby authorise St Brigid’s College to make such inquiries as it considers necessary to verify the accuracy of the information provided in this document.

NAME(S): _____
 (Please Print)

SIGNATURE(S): _____

DATE: ____/____/____

Office Use only:			
Application for Fee reduction has been Approved for \$_____ / Declined (please circle):			
Total Balance Owing as at		/ /	\$
Principal		Date:	
Business Manager		Date:	