



School Fee Collection Policy

1.0 Rationale

To support the provision of outstanding educational Service to the community, Catherine McAuley College Bendigo ('The College'), governed by Mercy Education Ltd, sets an appropriate fee level. Justice to all requires that fees are collected, while Compassion is shown to those in need. The procedures for fee collection embody Respect to all involved.

2.0 Scope

All staff, students and parents

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1. Communication with Parents/Carers on Outstanding Fees

- **Contact:** If fees are overdue, the school will reach out to Parents/Carers via written, electronic, and/or phone contact.
- **Record-Keeping:** All communications about outstanding fees will be documented and securely maintained within the schools finance system.

3.2. Assessing Financial Ability and Payment Plans

- **Assessment:** The school will work to understand the financial capacity of Parents/Carers to meet outstanding fees.
- **Payment Plans:** When possible, a payment plan will be arranged to help families manage their fee obligations.
 - If the payment plan extends beyond the current calendar year, the family will need to complete the school fee assistance process, and the principal must approve the plan.

3.3. Exiting the College

- **Notice Period:** If a student is withdrawing during the school year, a term's notice in writing is required.
- **Pro-Rata Payment:** School Fees will be calculated up to the end of the final week of enrolment and must be paid.

3.4. Procedures for Persistent Non-Payment

- If Parents/Carers consistently refuse to pay or do not engage in meaningful discussion about their school fees status, the college may take steps to collect fees, including:
 - **Debt Collection:** In cases where there is no demonstrated hardship, the school may involve a Debt Collection Agency or issue a solicitor's letter. The fee payer will be informed in advance and will bear any additional costs.
 - **Approval for Legal Action:** Before legal action or seeking a judgment, the school will obtain approval from the Mercy Education Limited (MEL) Chief Executive.

3.5. Enrolment Status and Access to School Programs

- **No Termination of Enrolment:** A student's enrolment will never be terminated due to outstanding fees.
- **Core Programs:** All students, regardless of fee status, will have full access to core programs and activities.
- **Optional Programs:** If there are significant outstanding fees, the school may, with discretion, limit access to optional programs (e.g., musical instrument lessons, formals, travel programs).

3.6. Confidentiality and Privacy

- **Confidentiality:** All actions and discussions pertaining to fee collection will be conducted with strict confidentiality and shared solely with individuals who have a legitimate need to know.

3.7. Regular Reporting to the Governing Board

- **Board Updates:** The school's governing board will receive regular updates on the level of outstanding fees on a regular basis.

4.0 Definitions

School Fees: The amounts charged by the College to families that contribute to the education of the children – they include tuition charges and levies.

Outstanding Fees: Are those not paid within the time frame set by the College and/or agreed with the individual.

Parents/Carers: Applies to an individual in a parenting capacity of a child, student, prospective student or past student, including carers, legal guardians, and natural, step, family caregiver, or adoptive parents.

Legal Action: Any process involving interaction with the court system

Financial Capacity: Refers to an individual's or families ability to meet financial obligations, such as paying bills, loans, or fees, based on their available income, assets, and financial stability. It encompasses the resources and cash flow necessary to cover expenses, manage debt, and support financial commitments over time.

5.0 Legislation

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Australian Consumer Law (ACL)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Debt Collection Guidelines (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission & Australian Securities and Investments Commission)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

6.0 Related Policies, Procedures, & forms

- Procedure 8.01A: Setting School Fees at Mercy Colleges
- Procedure 8.01B: Setting of School Fees at Mercy Colleges
- Mercy Policy 8.02A: Collection of Outstanding Fees at Mercy Colleges
- Mercy Education Debtor Legal Action Request Form
- Enrolment Policy
- School Fee Policy
- School Fee Collection Procedure

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