



Star of the Sea

SCHOOL

Open Hearts ~ Open Minds

Star of the Sea School

Fee Policy

8th August 2024

Star of the Sea School is a co-educational Catholic Primary Parish School serving the needs of children from Reception to Year 6 in the Western region of Adelaide.

The following policy provides the guidelines for the setting, collection and remission of these fees.

School fees are an essential part of the school's income. All Catholic Schools receive Government Grants (Commonwealth and State) to cover the cost of teacher wages. The school is dependent upon income from; school fees and charges for the provision of educational facilities and resources, payment of day-to-day operational works and capital works, to provide contemporary education for our students. It is therefore critical that school fees are paid in a timely manner.

When enrolling your child(ren) at Star of the Sea, families do so with the understanding that you are responsible for the payment of **all** school fees and charges associated with their education.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Fee Policy is to establish Star of the Sea's principles regarding all activities related to the charging and payment of tuition and associated fees, granting remissions, and providing necessary support to financially disadvantaged families.

The Finance Committee of the School Board oversees the collection of fees and regularly reviews outstanding payments. This Committee reports the status of fee collection to the School Board, ensuring that family details remain confidential.

POLICY STATEMENT

Star of the Sea operates in accordance with the SACCS guideline for maintaining private income. The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) policy states that financial circumstances should not prevent a student from accessing a Catholic education. Families with the capacity to pay fees are expected to do so promptly. However, if financial challenges are identified during the enrolment process, these issues should be discussed and agreed upon prior to enrolment. The financial situation will be reviewed annually to accommodate any changes in income.

FEE STRUCTURE

The annual school fee covers tuition costs, levies, class and subject resources including teacher photocopying, excursions, school-based activities, ICT equipment and maintenance, software and stationery. This fee includes costs associated with teaching staff, administration support, classroom ESO support, insurance, utilities, grounds and cleaning expenses, and general maintenance.

SCHEDULE OF FEES

The Finance Committee, consisting of the Principal, Finance Manager and School Board Treasurer, will oversee policies relating to the setting of fees, remissions, and collections. Once approved by the School Board notification will be given to the families prior to the end of the school year.

On application for enrolment, parent/caregivers will be provided with the Schedule of Fees and the School's Fee Policy. Prospective parents/caregivers will also be informed that on enrolment of their child, they accept the responsibility for the payment of tuition fees and other costs associated with the education of their children. Parents/caregivers make a commitment to pay school fees when they sign the Application for Enrolment Form for Star of the Sea.

Application Fee

An application fee of \$55.00 is to be paid upon submission of the School Enrolment Form (This fee is non-refundable).

Enrolment Deposit Fee

Enrolment Deposit Fee of \$200 is to be paid upon acceptance of enrolment and completion of the Acceptance of Enrolment Offer Form (This fee is also non-refundable). This fee is credited to the individual in the first Term's fee account.

Tuition Fee

Star of the Sea operates within the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools guidelines. Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) sets the level of school fees. Full year fees will be billed in Term 1 of each year and statements will be issued to all families.

Students commencing or leaving during the year will be charged a pro rata amount for school fees.

Extra-Curricular activities

The school fees do not include significant overnight, out of school activities that support the curriculum. The following items will be charged separately: Camps for Years 5-6, Music Tuition, After School Sports and other extra-curricular activities.

FAMILY/SIBLING DISCOUNTS

A discount is given to families with more than one child attending Star of the Sea School.

PAYMENT OF FEES

All families are required to set up a formally documented payment plan each school year. The following payment options are:

- Direct Debit from a nominated bank account or credit card
- Cash or Credit card at Front Office
- BPay
- Qkr! app

SPLITTING OF ACCOUNTS

Fee Accounts will not be split unless there is a Court Order specifying that the account is to be split (including how it is to be split).

SCHOOL CARD REMISSION

Star of the Sea School will also support families eligible for School Card by providing a discount (Low Income Fee).

The Government of South Australia offers assistance for families via the School Card Scheme. Families on low incomes are encouraged to apply for Government assistance under the School Card Scheme. It is important that parents/caregivers work with the school to complete the necessary documentation, as there are administrative cut-off dates (determined by the Department of Education and Children's Services) that apply each year and need to be complied with to receive funds for each eligible child.

School Card can be applied for online <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/financial-help-scholarships-and-grants/school-card-scheme> or a form can be obtained from the School office.

Families eligible and approved for School Card will automatically receive a 40% reduction in their tuition fees.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP/REMISSION

If families are suffering financial hardship, they are encouraged to apply in writing for assistance for a warranted reduction in tuition fees. Any applications for tuition fee assistance are treated as confidential. Non-payment of reduced tuition fees is treated as an overdue account.

Any variation in fee payments will be considered in terms of the financial need of the family, and of Star of the Sea School responsibility to families who are making effort to pay fees.

Families are granted a reduction of tuition fees for the current year only, after which time they would need to reapply in future years if their financial circumstances have not changed.

It is the families responsibility and obligation to contact the Finance Manager if their financial position improves.

Families are encouraged to:

- Make an appointment to meet with the Finance Manager if they have difficulty in paying fees to discuss payment options.
- Submit an 'Application for Remission' form available from the Finance Manager if a fee variation is required. Once submitted, an appointment to meet with the Finance Manager and/or the Principal will be arranged to discuss the application.

To maintain confidentiality the Board is informed of the number of applications and dollar amount of remissions granted, only. Names or identifying information will not be disclosed at any time.

NON-PAYMENT OF FEES

Star of the Sea recognises that there are different needs within our community. Financial hardship can occur through unforeseen circumstances. When faced with payment difficulties, families are encouraged to negotiate promptly with the Finance Manager to avoid any misunderstanding and hardship in the collection of tuition fees.

The Principal/Delegate may take appropriate action to ensure a parent/caregiver's fee obligations are met, including, but not limited to, restricting a student's participation in major extra-curricular activities where a significant amount of school fees is outstanding.

LATE PAYMENT CHARGES

Star of the Sea openly encourages regular communication between all parties. If families are unable to pay school fees prior to the due date, families must contact the Finance Manager. Failure to do so may result in a \$20 late payment fee and could be applied to family accounts for each term's outstanding arrears.

STUDENTS ON EXTENDED LEAVE FROM SCHOOL

There is no fee reduction for students who are away from school due to holidays, etc., and have not terminated their contract with the school.

NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL

Families are required to give one term's notice in writing to the Principal when withdrawing their child(ren) from the school, as the Application for Enrolment and Acceptance of Offer are legal documents. Families must also advise us of the new school the student(s) will be attending.

Should this notice not be given, one term's fee will be added to the final account, after any adjustments.

The Board is aware that some families will have extenuating circumstances for withdrawing their child(ren) from the school and may be unable to give one term's notice. In this instance, it will be at the discretion of the Principal and Finance Manager if the withdrawal fees will be processed.

DEBT COLLECTION

Debt Collection at Star of the Sea will be in line with the CESA Fee Procedures.

All discussion/correspondence regarding debt management about outstanding fees will be based on the positive and respectful relationships between the school and families.

If a student leaves Star of the Sea and there are any outstanding school fees and charges, payments must continue according to the agreed payment arrangement between the school and family, until the fee is completely paid.

Where fees remain outstanding with no agreed arrangement for payment, the account may be passed to the school's debt collection agency, who may if directed, take court action to recover the fees, where deemed appropriate.

FEE COLLECTION TIMELINES

Invoices & Statements of Account

- The annual statement of account for tuition fees and charges will be sent to families during Week 3 Term 1 of school returning each year; and
- By the end of Week 3 of Terms 2, 3 & 4, a statement of accounts will be sent to families as a reminder.

Payment Timelines

- If a regular payment arrangement is not entered, then one third of the annual school fees will be due for payment by the end of Term 1, 2 and 3. Where payments are not received by the end of each term, an account rendered statement will be sent with an overdue reminder.
- For payment arrangements made via direct payment or credit card, families will have a timeframe for payment(s) of February until 30 November each year. Statements will be sent during the year, and it is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that the deduction cycle and amount are sufficient to ensure fees are paid in full each year by 30 November.

Revision Record:

Document Title	Star of the Sea School Fee Policy
Document Type	Policy
Document Dates	8 th August 2024
Document Status	Pending Approval
Document Owner	Star of the Sea School
Review Date	August 2027