



Saint Ignatius College

Geelong

A Jesuit Partner School

SCHOOL FEE POLICY

Author: College Board

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PREAMBLE

Saint Ignatius College is committed to the provision of Catholic secondary education for all eligible students from the twelve regional parishes of the Geelong Deanery. The Fees Policy has been established to ensure that no eligible student is denied access to Catholic secondary education on the grounds of financial inability.

VALUES

The values which inform this policy are:

- Justice
- Equality
- Trust
- Commitment to those with special needs
- Concern for the pastoral well being of all
- Promotion of community

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL FEES

- As a Catholic school, Saint Ignatius College's income is received from Government grants, school fees and fundraising by the College community.
- The level of fees charged must be sufficient to support the educational program of the College.
- Those responsible for the setting of school fees will be sensitive to the financial constraints upon families wishing to send their daughters and sons to Saint Ignatius College.

POLICY

The following policy must be interpreted in the light of the Saint Ignatius College Vision and Mission Statement and read in conjunction with the Enrolment Policy. Therefore, in implementing this policy, the College Principal and College Board have a degree of discretion.

Given the assumptions about school fees, it is the policy of the College that:

1. An annual all-inclusive tuition fee will be charged for each student enrolled at Saint Ignatius College, as well as a building levy charged per family. However, at the senior level of the College, the possibility of an additional levy for certain subjects will be considered at the time of setting the annual budget. At the time of enrolment, families will be made aware of the College School Fee Policy which will be available on the College Website.
2. The level of school fee will be reviewed annually by the College Board taking into account the financial needs of the College and the ability of the College community to meet these fees.
3. Family discounts will be granted to all families who have two or more students enrolled at Saint Ignatius College.

4. (i) A support mechanism known as Special Consideration will be made available to families who experience genuine financial hardship. Parents may apply for a reduction of their annual fees through this mechanism. The Board will budget an amount each year for the provision of assistance to these families.
 - (ii) Fee concessions will be granted according to need but there is an expectation that a minimum contribution would be made by all. Fee concessions are reviewed annually. The College Principal, assisted by the Business Manager, is authorized to grant school fee remissions to families in need.
5. Access is not denied to Catholic students because of an inability to pay school fees.
6. Outstanding school fees will be pursued as a matter of justice to other parents.
7. Parents need to be aware that non payment of fees will impact on the potential of a student's involvement in the extra-curricular program of the College. Parents account history will be considered when deciding students eligibility to attend extra-curricular activities such as overseas tours and trips.
8. Legal procedures to recover outstanding fees may not be instituted without the express permission of the College Board's Finance Committee.
9. Due consideration will be given to C.E.C.V. and Archdiocesan policies.
10. There is no reduction in fees as a result of a student's involvement in studies outside the College. The College annual fee is based on the assumption that students complete all their studies at the College. Consequently any costs associated with variations from the mainstream programs of study must be met by individual families. Opportunities for students to study off site are provided to families on the assumption that they will meet the costs of such programs.

CONSEQUENCES

This policy will be used to guide the annual decision as to the level of school fees charged and the determining of any additional levies at the senior level of the College.

At the time of enrolling their daughter or son, parents will be made aware of the obligation to pay school fees regularly and will be required to sign an undertaking to do so. Families will have access to the College School Fee Policy.

Normally, eligibility for fee remission should be formally sought with adequate supporting financial information. However, in some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the College to take initiative to offer a fee remission, e.g. sudden death of family breadwinner. The decision of the College regarding eligibility for fee remission shall always be conveyed in writing.

When a parent has difficulty paying school fees, this will be treated with discretion and confidentiality on a one-to-one basis.

The method of billing school fees will be designed to facilitate the College's cash flow and to assist parents in meeting their commitment to pay fees.

In pursuing payment of outstanding fees, the College will undertake whatever steps are necessary to ascertain the family's ability to meet the debt and then if necessary, and with the College Board's approval, take legal steps to recover the money owed to the College.

PROCEDURES

1. *Setting of School Fees*

The College Board will determine the level of school fees (tuition and levies) based on budget estimates to meet the needs of the College for the following year. In the final term of the school year, parents will be advised of the school fees for the following year.

1.1. Fee Charging Procedures

- As far as is practical, fees will include all costs and charges necessary to cover student subjects for the year.
- The Board is not in favour of the College asking parents to pay for additional compulsory subject costs, excursions, etc., which were not included in the original fees structure.
- Some charges may be invoiced separately during the year with the approval of the Principal. These may include certain non-compulsory excursions and elective subjects such as VET , VCAL and Outdoor Education.
- Students taking private music lessons at the College, are invoiced separately.

1.2. Students Commencing During The Term

- All students commencing SICG mid term will be required to pay full fees for that term where the term is half complete or less.
- Where the term is more than half complete, pro rata fees will be charged on a weekly basis. All levies and charges for camps and excursions yet to be undertaken will be fully charged.

1.3. Refund of Fees to Exiting Students

- A refund of fees is calculated after an Exit Form, completed and signed has been received by the College. When a student exits during a term, that term's fees will be charged in full. If fees are paid in advance there will be a refund of term fees not attended by the student.

1.4. Enrolment Fee

- An Enrolment Fee is charged to all prospective students who accept an enrolment offer.
- Payment of this fee indicates a clear commitment of intention by the parent(s) to take up the place that has been offered.
- The amount of this fee will be set from year to year by the Principal.
- In the event that the parent(s) subsequently withdraw the child, prior to commencing school, this fee will not be refunded.
- In the event that the College subsequently withdraws the offer of a place to a student, this fee will be refunded.
- A percentage of this fee will be applied against the first year's Tuition Fees. The balance represents an administration charge.

2. *Fee Collection*

2.1. Fee Collection Policy

- It is acknowledged that there is a wide divergence in our families' financial circumstances. Fee collection procedures will be structured to assist parents to cope with their own particular circumstances.
- No Catholic child shall be excluded from SICG because of the parents' inability to pay fees.
- The College has a responsibility to the wider school community to make every reasonable endeavour to collect fees from those families who can afford them. In extreme circumstances, this may include legal action when all other avenues have been explored.

2.2. Fee Collection Procedures

2.2.1. Payment methods available to parents

- The standard method is by payment in full by the end of Term 2.
- Parents who are unable to pay by the standard method may make special arrangements to pay their fees off on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, provided that under these arrangements, their fees are finalized by the end of the

school year. All arrangements are to be made in conjunction with the Business Manager or his / her nominated assistant.

- Alternative methods of payment are:
 - *Direct Debit* – Where parents authorize the College to debit a nominated amount from their bank account.
 - *BPay* – Where parents electronically transfer funds to the College using Biller Code.
 - *Bank Deposit* – Where parents deposit funds directly at their bank using their College Account Code.
 - *Credit cards* – The College accepts all credit cards with the exception of Diners Club and American Express.
 - *Cash Payments* – Nominated amounts to be paid directly to the Finance Office.

2.3. *Collection Procedures*

2.3.1. Statements are mailed to all parents at the commencement of each school year and at the start of Term 2.

2.3.2. Parents who dishonour standing fee payment arrangements are to be given every reasonable opportunity to remedy the situation prior to serious action being taken against them. Normal fee collection procedures are as follows:

- A fee statement will be mailed requesting payment.
- If no response, a letter from the Principal requesting account be settled as soon as possible, or an appointment be made with the Business Manager to make suitable payment arrangement and that fee concessions may be granted in cases of financial hardship.
- Should parents continue to avoid contact, a second Principal's letter is to be sent advising if payment is not received by due date, account may be referred to the College Debt Collector, once again stating that fee concessions may be granted in cases of financial hardship and to contact the Business Manager if this is the case.
- If parents do not respond, contact will be made by phone advising that account will be referred to Debt Collector if arrangement is not made to clear debt.

2.4. *Families Facing Hardship*

2.4.1. Parents who are unable to meet their fees by any of the above methods will be eligible to special consideration.

2.5. *Legal Action*

2.5.1. The College will take legal action to recover outstanding fees where:

- Every attempt outlined above has been disregarded by the parent(s).
- The procedures outlined in 2.3 have been ineffective.
- It is the opinion of the Principal and the Business Manager, after due consideration, that the family has the ability to pay the debt.

3. *Special Consideration*

A formal application process is required for arriving at a decision to grant a special consideration.

The following criteria will be considered:

- Total family income
- Family size
- Other educational institutions to which the family has commitments
- Availability of discounts at other educational institutions
- Availability of Government assistance to parents
- Other extraordinary family commitments

In the final determination of a fee remission, consideration will be given both to the need for an actual remission in the amount of money to be paid to the College, and the need to spread the payment over an appropriate time.

This Policy will be implemented in accordance with existing privacy legislation and related policies.