



# St Joseph's School WONTHAGGI

## School Fee Policy

*Balancing the need to respect and include the poor with the other responsibilities of ethical stewardship calls for judgment inspired by prayer and spirituality capable of sound discernment.*

### COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS

- All Catholic children have a right to a Catholic education.
- In line with other primary schools in the Diocese of Sale, St Joseph's Primary School will charge a family fee. *(NB. This practice is strongly encouraged by the Diocesan Education Council.)*
- No child should be excluded from St Joseph's Primary School because of an inability of his/her family to honour fee payments.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

- The matter of fees and their payment should be discussed with parents at the time of enrolment.
- Parents should be given a copy of this policy at enrolment and have it clearly explained to them.

### EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY

- At the time of this policy's development, St Joseph's School was experiencing an annual fee collection rate of 95%. Should there be a significant drop in the percentage of families meeting their fee commitments, it will be the Principal's responsibility to formally investigate the possible causes (and remedies) for this.

### SETTING FEES AT ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

- It is the Principal who initially suggests what a reasonable level of school fees for the coming year should be. The Parish Priest, however, takes final responsibility for this decision and must be consulted. Formal consultation with parents is available through the Parents & Friends Committee.
- The annual increase in the Consumer Price Index is likely to provide a reasonable guide to the raising of school fees each year.
- The level of fees charged is a fine balance between the needs of the school and the capacity of the community to pay.

## **FEE RELIEF and FEE EXEMPTION**

- Concessions and exemptions will only be offered to families experiencing genuine financial hardship.
- The possibility of fee concessions or exemptions may be raised at any time by the parents, the Principal or the Parish Priest. The final decision always rests with the Parish Priest.
- Recognising that access to St Joseph's School may be denied to Catholic children when the fees are high, the School authorities should feel confident in approaching Catholic families who may not have enrolled their children because of an unwillingness to seek fee relief in times of financial hardship.

## **COLLECTION OF SCHOOL FEES**

- Parents who can afford to pay fees are expected to make the required contribution for the education of their children, recognising that the failure to pay school fees creates a burden for the remainder of school community.
- Parents at St Joseph's School will be offered a number of payment methods, i.e. cheque, cash, direct debit, EFTPOS and direct deposit.
- The usual arrangement for the payment of fees and levies is as follows:
  - ~ all fees including levies and family fees will be issued at the beginning of the term
  - ~ all families will receive a statement by week 2 of that term
  - ~ payment will be due by week 5 of each term.
  - ~ follow up statements will be issued only to those with outstanding fees

## **COLLECTION OF UNPAID SCHOOL FEES**

- Families showing signs of falling behind with their payments will be followed up on a personal basis at an early occasion. Follow up will be conducted by an appropriate person or persons in a sensitive, discreet and confidential fashion.
- Discussion around unpaid fees does not involve the children. The entire family is to be protected from public embarrassment.
- There may be occasions where St Joseph's School chooses to use a variety of methods to follow up those who have not met their fee obligations. These processes must always be sensitive and orderly.
- After appropriate personal and pastoral contact, letters may be used to remind people of obligations and undertakings.
- As a further step in the process of fee collection, the school authority may decide to send official legal letters seeking payment, especially in cases where it is understood that the parent/guardian can pay but is unwilling to do so.
- Such letter(s) would make explicit reference to the legal action which may be taken should the person responsible for the fees refuse to make appropriate financial arrangement with the school authorities.