

PROCEDURE: School Fees and Concessions

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to describe Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) approach to managing school fee and levy concessions.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with: School Fees and Concession policy; School Fees and Other Income Administration procedure and Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. General requirements

Schools must communicate the school fee structure to parents and guardians. In considering the level of school charges most appropriate for an individual school, the principles in s.3 of this procedure must be applied.

Schools must ensure that financial constraints and hardship do not discourage parents and guardians from enrolling their children by offering fee concessions. To ensure the viability of BCE schools, schools must augment government funding received with charges, levies, and other support from the school community.

Concessions must be calculated annually using the BCE Concessions template, the financial circumstances of families, and based on a just and equitable formula. Concessions do not transfer from primary to colleges or between schools. The concession must be calculated on a case-by-case basis.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Principal (or delegate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set school fees and levies based on BCE guidelines and local requirements • ensure Enrolment Application form is completed by parents or guardians as part of the enrolment process • tailor concessions to encourage families in financial hardship to enrol their children • ensure a Confidential Application for Fees Concession form is completed by parents or guardians as part of a request for concession • manage and approve concessions using the BCE Concessions template • calculate concessions using the BCE Concessions template.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 School fee components

School fees should be separated into the following minimum components:

- tuition fee
- capital levy
- school levies and excursions
- building fund donation (tax deductible), only if there is support in the community
- library fund donation (tax deductible), only if there is support in the community
- parish donation, only if requested by the parish and there is support in the community.

3.2 Fee increases

BCE determines the fee increase range, informed by the Commonwealth Government’s Direct Measure of Income (DMI) and the capacity to contribute to the School Resource Standard, and communicate this on an annual basis.

Increases must only be considered after a thorough review of expenditure, to ensure transparent and accountable stewardship of resources. All school expenditure must be justified, and needs based.

When communicating with parents or guardians, the language used in relation to fees must be clear and the information regarding fees and levies be transparent and consistent across the community of schools. Consideration must be given to communicating school fee increases to parents in the form of actual dollars per week, per term and/or per year.

3.3 Sibling discounts

Sibling discounts must be offered as percentage discounts:

- second child: charge 60% of first child tuition fee rate ie. 40% sibling discount
- third child: charge 40% of first child tuition fee rate
- fourth child: charge 20% of first child tuition fee rate
- additional children: no charge for tuition fees

Where there is a significant difference to the above sibling percentages in sibling discounts currently offered, a school may transition over three years to the year 2025.

3.4 Concessions

Fee concessions must be planned and managed through the BCE Concessions template and approval processes. Using the BCE Concessions template which incorporates the Henderson Poverty Lines data, the Principal (or delegate) determines the fee to be paid or whether further clarification from parents or guardians is required.

The formula for determining a reasonable fee payable for a family is based upon the total disposable income of the family less basic housing costs.

Concessions may be granted by the Principal without necessitating an interview. However, if the Principal is not entirely satisfied that the information supplied is correct, or feels a need to discuss the matter further, the Principal must request an interview with the parent/s or guardian (see s.3.5 below).

Additional considerations:

- in arriving at a fee, the Principal (or delegate) must have in mind a responsibility to the system and its needs, and equity to other parents and students at the school
- an amount, however small, must be charged to all families

- fee concessions apply for one calendar year only. A new application must be submitted annually
- Principals may grant a concession which varies from the amount determined in the Concessions template, if it is felt to be just and necessary. A written record must be kept explaining the reasons for the variation
- Health Care Cards, which are financially assessed by the Commonwealth Government, may be used as supporting documentation for fee concessions.

Families must be supported through a preferential option for the poor.

3.5 Fee and concession interviews

Interviews conducted by the Principal (or delegate) are encouraged. It is advisable for the Principal (or delegate) to validate concessions with another member of the leadership team if they are not present at the interview.

3.6 Application fees and deposits

Application fees, enrolment deposits and refundable bond amounts must be reasonable, and consistent with the principles of equity, affordability, and community expectation.

3.7 Full fee paying overseas students

Commonwealth and state governments do not provide recurrent grant funding for the education of overseas students. As a result, schools must charge a higher fee compared to domestic students. The level of school fees to be charged must consider the School Resourcing Standard and the capital levy.

3.8 Systemic schools

Sibling discounts must be supported where possible across systemic schools. Communication must be undertaken with systemic schools in proximity, to ensure general alignment and consistency of charges.

3.9 Termination of payment

Should an account holder terminate their future financial obligation for the payment of fees, levies and charges for their child, the other parent/legal guardian is requested to submit an Enrolment Confirmation – Revision of Financial Obligations form which covers 100% of the future fees, levies and charges when a termination form is returned.

While a student will never be denied a Catholic education due to a family's genuine inability to pay fees, should the Enrolment Confirmation – Revision of Financial Obligations form not be submitted, the school will commence discussions with the parents/legal guardians regarding the ongoing payment of school fees

3.10 Records management

All matters are dealt with on a confidential basis. All discussions must be documented, and relevant documentary evidence securely filed. The School Fee Concession Agreement and Payment Agreement (signed by both parties) must form part of this documentation. The concession agreement must be signed by either the Principal or delegate of the school. The authorised delegate includes other leadership team members or an external fee administrator or Business Manager. All approved concessions must be supported by relevant documentation.

3.11 Complaints

Complaints about school fees and concessions must be managed under the Student, Parent, and Guardian Complaints Management policy and procedure.

4. PERFORMANCE

Compliance monitoring roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Role	Compliance responsibilities
Manager – School Finance Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• record and report frequent and serious non-compliance with this procedure to the Head of School Resource and Financial Sustainability for consideration and remedial action• report on non-compliance with this procedure to the Finance Committee.

5. REFERENCES

- Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct
- School Fees and Concessions policy
- School Fees and Other Income Administration procedure
- Student, Parent, and Guardian Complaints Management policy and procedure.