

PROCEDURE: School Fee and Other Income Administration

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline Brisbane Catholic Education’s (BCE) approach to the administration/collection of school fees and other income.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with: School Fees and Concessions policy and procedure; School Finance Internal Control procedure; and Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 General requirements

No child is to be excluded from a BCE school or college on the grounds of genuine inability of the family to pay fees. All families who are financially able should pay fees as set and advised annually by the school. It is expected that school fees charged will be paid by the due date.

Other Debtors i.e., not parent/guardians, are expected to pay charges as per the payment terms agreed with the school.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Principal (or delegate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ensure the school’s processes for the collection of outstanding school fees and other income conforms to the requirements of this procedure.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 Issuing of accounts

Accounts for school fees must be forwarded to account holder/s or debtor within the first two (2) weeks of each fee period e.g., term. School fee charges including the capital levy must be separately identified on the account.

The fee account must show a due date for payment of the fees. The due date must generally be within 14-30 days from the date of issue but must not extend beyond the last day of the fee period in which the fee account has been issued.

Accounts for other income must be forwarded when goods or services are provided. The due date must be within 14 days from the date of issue.

3.2 Reminder statements

On expiry of the due date for school fee accounts, a Reminder Statement must be sent, giving the account holder/s a set period (normally 14 days) to pay. Schools may then choose to send a second reminder statement or utilise the collection letter functionality within the school finance system as part of this follow up process.

If a suitable response is not received within the school designated timeframe, the Principal (or delegate e.g., business manager, finance officer, fee administrator) must contact the account holder/s. The objective of the phone call/contact is:

- discuss the outstanding debt value
- determine what assistance is required to assist the family with managing the debt
- confirm a workable approach moving forward.

If there are no extenuating circumstances, the Principal (or delegate) may remind the account holder/s or debtor of the payment undertakings which formed part of the initial enrolment process.

Where language and ethnic circumstances warrant, contact through a liaison person is recommended.

On expiry of the due date for other debtor accounts, a Reminder Statement must be sent, giving the debtor a set period (normally 14 days) to pay.

If a suitable response is not received within the school designated timeframe, the Principal (or delegate e.g., business manager, finance officer, fee administrator) must contact the debtor. The object of the phone call/contact is:

- discuss the outstanding debt value
- confirm a workable approach moving forward.

If there are no extenuating circumstances, the Principal (or delegate) may discuss the ongoing provision of the goods or service to the debtor.

3.3 Collection agency

If, after two (2) weeks from making verbal contact or if attempts to make contact are unsuccessful with the account holder/s or debtor and no satisfactory arrangements have been reached, and there appears to be no other workable solution, then the account may be sent to a collection agency.

Although the account holder/s should pay the school, some will pay the collection agency. If this is the case, the amount received must be remitted to the school by the collection agency on a timely basis and recorded as advised by the Support Accountants team.

3.4 Legal action

On occasions it may be necessary for the school to proceed to legal action. Action may only occur when there is clear evidence of ability to pay, yet the account holder/s or debtor refuse to do so or delay paying. This action must not include the garnishing of wages or forced sale of property.

To proceed to the following levels of legal action, where the account holder/s or debtor credit rating may be affected:

- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), the decision can be made by the Principal
- Magistrates Court, approval must be obtained from the Head - School Resourcing & Infrastructure Sustainability (HSRIS) or Manager – School Finance Support in their absence.

When seeking approval for the Magistrates Court, schools must provide the following via email:

1. A summary of the actions that the school has undertaken to date to recover the outstanding debt.
2. For school fee accounts, confirmation the school holds on file the original signed Enrolment Confirmation form and any subsequent Revision of Financial Obligations form where the parents/guardians accept responsibility for their fee obligations.
3. A brief response to each of the following:
 - is the debt significant enough to warrant legal action?
 - is there clear evidence of capacity to pay?
 - is there a good and reasonable chance of successful recovery of most, if not all of the outstanding debt?
 - have all other avenues been exhausted to try and recover the debt?
 - is there an expectation that the legal costs involved are not significant and will not outweigh the potential recovery amount?

Once there is a judgement through the Magistrate Court, further approval through the HSRIS is required before actioning the decision.

3.5 Enrolment

When parents/guardians apply for enrolment of children for whom they have not paid school fees at a previous systemic school, the enrolment must not be confirmed until the debt is paid or waived on the previous principal's advice. Arrangements for payment of future fees must then be put in place before proceeding with the enrolment.

3.6 Health Care Card

Where a school offers a Health Care Card concession, a copy of the Health Care Card should be kept, and the standard concession applied. Schools must monitor the expiry date of health care cards.

3.7 Records management

Schools must maintain records of school administration of fees and concessions in accordance with the Records Management policy and supporting documents (on Spire). This includes protecting the privacy of personal information collected by the school through confidential records management.

3.8 Complaints

Complaints must be managed under the Student, Parent, and Guardian Complaint 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

Role	Compliance responsibilities
	Financial Sustainability for consideration and remedial action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Concessions procedure
- Student, Parent, and Guardian Complaints Management policy and procedure.