

FEE POLICY

Vision

St Martin's Catholic Primary School is a school community that recognises the uniqueness of every person, nurturing faith and wellbeing, and pursuing excellence in education.

Our Mission

The mission of St Martin's Catholic Primary School community is to work in partnership to educate young people in the Church and our changing world.

St Martin's School Board is guided by the following principles:

- all tuition fee processes and procedures are consistent with the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) fee policy
- annual school fees are a main source of income available to meet the school's operating costs each year
- where families have the capacity to pay fees, then in the matter of fairness, that those who can afford to pay do so
- fees are set at a level to maintain quality education for all students whilst having consideration for the financial capacity of the community
- tuition fees are reviewed each year and adjusted yearly to avoid steep increases
- low-income fee is set for those families who are eligible for the Government administered School Card scheme
- parents/guardians seeking enrolment for their child will be fully informed of the school's expectation regarding the payment of tuition fees which is outlined on the Acceptance of Enrolment Offer that parents/guardians sign when accepting a place for their child at the school
- upon a student's enrolment, schools agree to provide educational services for which parents/guardians accept the responsibility for payment of fees in a timely manner
- it is the responsibility of the School Board to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to enable the collection of school fees.

Introduction

St Martin's Fee Policy is in accordance with the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) Fee Policy dated 2020.

The education of students is a joint responsibility between school and parents of St Martin's Catholic Primary School, Greenacres.

Tuition fees are an essential part of the school's income. All Catholic schools receive Australian and State Government funding to cover the cost of teachers' salaries. The income from Tuition Fees pays for the operation of the school. For example, loan payments for capital development, non-teaching salaries, curriculum resources and professional learning, electricity, water, rates, Catholic Education Office (CEO) levies and charges.

Parents/guardians, in part, fulfil their responsibility through the payment of tuition fees and other costs associated with their child's education.

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of the policy is to set out St Martin's Catholic Primary Schools' principles in relation to all activities associated with charging and payment of tuition fees, granting remissions and providing financially disadvantaged families with low-income fees.

Scope

The Fee Policy applies to the charging and payment of tuition fee and low-income fee, granting of remissions and discounts on behalf of the school.

Risk Management

- The school will ensure that appropriate practices and procedures of internal control and risk management are in place for its fee remission activities including risk identification, assessment and implementation of controls.
- The Principal will be responsible for ensuring appropriate practices and procedures for internal controls and risk management are adhered to.

Principles

Professional Integrity, Accountability and Probity

- School personnel engaged in charging of fees or granting remission or discounts will always undertake their duties fully within the ethos and the mission of St Martin's Catholic Primary School and its policies.
- School personnel engaged in charging of fees or granting remission or discounts will work with parents/guardians in a just, respectful, compassionate, transparent, and considered manner in the process for setting and collecting fees.
- All processes relating to school tuition fees will be open, fair, and transparent.
- School personnel will not use or disclose information that confers unfair disadvantage or financial benefit or detriment on a parent/guardian.
- When undertaking charging fees or providing remissions or discounts, school personnel will not engage in any private business or professional activity that would create conflict between personal interest and the interest of the school.
- The school will ensure that appropriate practices and procedures of internal control are implemented and monitored for its fee charging activities. All fee charging or remission activities will leave an audit trail for monitoring and reporting purposes. Compliance with the Fee Charging/Remission Procedures may be subject to audit reviews.

Delegated Authority

 Principal and Business Manager to process all applications for Fee Remission in a confidential and private manner.

Tuition Fee Structure

St Martin's Catholic Primary School has adopted the CESA preferred approach of Full Fee and Lower Income Approach.

St Martin's has 2 tuition fee types for families:

- 1) Full Tuition Fee
- 2) Lower Income Tuition Fee

All Tuition fees support the operating/costs of the school not met by Australian and State Government funding received.

- Tuition fees are inclusive of all compulsory fees, levies and related charges, however any extra-curricular
 or discretionary items may be excluded and listed separately (e.g. camps and ICT laptop charges).
- Current Tuition Fees (refer Appendix A)
- Tuition Fees are reviewed each year and adjusted at the discretion of the School Board.
- Tuition Fees will not be reduced by any other amount apart from Sibling Discount unless a Remission has been approved.
- An early payment discount will be determined by the School Board each year.
- Parents will be notified of following year's tuition fees by the end of October of the current school year.
- Tuition Fees will be charged on an annual basis. Payments are required by the due dates as notified in communications.
- Invoice/Statements will be forward by the completion of Week 2, Term 1.
- Statements will be forward home on a monthly basis.
- Students starting at later dates during the year will have their fees applied at a rate determined by the length of stay.
- Students who take leave during the year will not receive a discount or credit for time not at school.
- No fee reduction will be given for family grievances.

Lower Income Tuition Fees:

Lower income Tuition Fees are offered to families who are approved for School Card under the School Card Scheme, this is a State Government administered scheme.

 St Martin's Catholic Primary School will provide families with the Lower Income Tuition Fees if they are approved for School Card (refer below)

Enrolment for Less than Full Year

- Tuition fees will be pro-rated for new enrolments of less than a full year.
- Same payment methods and terms will apply

Withdrawal of a Student from School

- Families who are withdrawing from school prior to its completion are required to give one Term's written notice to the Principal.
- Failure to do so will incur one Term's fees penalty.
- This penalty will be required to be paid prior to exit.

Discounts and Remissions

Sibling Discounts:

Sibling discounts are available to families with two or more children attending the school on the following basis:

- Sibling discounts apply to Tuition Fees.
- Sibling discounts will be applied at a rate based on the School Board's discretion.
- Sibling discounts are reviewed each year and adjusted at the discretion of the School Board in reference to the current 5-Year Plan.
- Sibling Discount Rates (refer to Appendix B)
- No discount is offered for siblings at other Catholic schools.

Early Payment Discounts:

- Payment of all fees before 1st March will receive a discount of 2.5%.
- This is only available for Full Tuition fee paying families.

Income Based Remissions

School Card:

- The School Card Scheme is administered by the Department of Education SA.
- It is an income means tested scheme providing assistance for low-income families towards the cost of education expenses.
- School Card application forms will be available from the School Office in February of each year.
- Families must apply annually for School Card.
- Families applying for School Card must continue to make payments prior to its approval.
- Families eligible for School Card will be charged Lower Income Tuition Fees
- Application can be made online at
 - https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/financial-help-scholarships-and-grants/school-card-scheme

Financial Difficulty Remissions

If parents/guardians are experiencing genuine financial difficulty, it is their responsibility to meet or discuss with the Principal or delegate for consideration of alternative financial arrangements.

Any such arrangements shall be formally communicated by the school, be subject to periodic review, and may have terms and conditions applied.

St Martin's Catholic Primary School can provide support to families experiencing difficulties in the following ways:

- 1) Deferred payment during the period of financial or hardship difficulty.
- 2) Reduced Payment Schedule during the period of financial or hardship difficulty.
- 3) Remission of Tuition Fees (refer Remission process)

Payment Methods and Terms of Payment

St Martin's Catholic Primary School requires <u>all</u> families to enter into payment plans that ensure school fees are fully paid by the completion of each school year, unless paying in full by 1st March.

Families must choose one of the following payment plans:

- Fortnightly (20)
- Monthly (10)
- Weekly (35)
- Quarterly (3)

All fees must be paid by 31st October of each year.

Any variation to the above needs to be communicated and authorised by the Business Manager for approval.

St Martin's offers the following payment options:

- Direct Debit System Direct payment via savings a/c
- Credit Card System Direct payment via credit cards
- EFTPOS Either Savings account or credit cards
- BPAY payment details are listed on family statements
- Centrelink deductions
- Cash
- Cheques will not be accepted
- AMEX will not be accepted

Payment times at school are as follows (unless special arrangements have been made):

Monday – Friday 8.30am to 3.15pm

Split Family Accounts:

- Accounts will not be split unless the school is required under law through a Court Order.
- All parents have a legal responsibility upon signing the Enrolment Form to pay all fees and charges owing
- Parents/guardians are required to make their own arrangements regarding payment of fees.

Debt Management

If an outstanding fee account is not resolved following the school's engagement with the parent/guardian using the Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) fee collection processes and procedures, the school may undertake debt collection procedures.

Appendices:

Appendix A | Tuition Fee Schedule

Appendix B | Sibling Discount Rates

Appendix C | Fee Process

Appendix D | Debt Management Letters

Implemented: 2021
Ratified by School Board: 2021
Reviewed: 2021
Next Review: 2024



ST MARTIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL FEE SCHEDULE 2023

Please find enclosed the 2023 School Fees as approved by the School Board in consultation with the Finance Committee.

The payment of school fees is a responsibility and commitment by families, and ensures the school maintains quality education and resources for the benefit of the students.

BILLING INFORMATION

School Fees will be invoiced annually (at the beginning of the year) with statements being issued once per term.

Payment plans are to be established and organised to ensure you meet your financial obligations to the school.

Following a change to Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) Fee Policy, <u>all families must enter a payment plan for 2023</u>. All fees must be finalised by <u>29 September 2023</u>.

2023 SCHOOL FEES

	FULL SCHOOL FEE	LOWER INCOME SCHOOL FEE
1 Child	\$2,900	\$2,000
2 Children	\$5,220	\$3,600
3 Children	\$6,960	\$4,800
4 or more Children	\$6,960	\$4,800

PAYMENT FREQUENCY

Full School Fee	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Term
	(35 Weeks)	(18 Fortnights)	(8 Months)	(3 Terms)
1 Child	\$82.86	\$161.11	\$362.50	\$966.67
2 Children	\$149.14	\$290.00	\$652.50	\$1,740.00
3 Children	\$198.86	\$386.67	\$870.00	\$2,320.00
4 or more Children	\$198.86	\$386.87	\$870.00	\$2,320.00

Lower Income School Fee	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Term
	(35 Weeks)	(18 Fortnights)	(8 Months)	(3 Terms)
1 Child	\$57.14	\$111.11	\$250.00	\$666.67
2 Children	\$102.85	\$200.00	\$450.00	\$1,200.00
3 Children	\$137.14	\$266.67	\$600.00	\$1,600.00
4 or more Children	\$137.14	\$266.67	\$600.00	\$1,600.00

FULL TUITION FEES PAYMENT DISCOUNT

A payment of the "Full School Fee" will result in a discount of 2.5% and will only apply if it is paid in full on or before 1/3/23. Please make your full payment less the discount below:

1 CHILD = \$72.50 2 = CHILDREN = \$130.50 3 CHILDREN = \$174.00 4 CHILDREN = \$174.00

PAYMENT OPTION AGREEMENT FORM

The Payment Option Agreement Form is enclosed together with other relevant forms in the fees package.

These forms must be completed and returned to the school for assessment and processing by 17 November 2022.

PAYMENT METHODS

St Martin's offers the following payment options:

- Direct Debit System Direct payment via savings a/c
- Credit Card System Direct payment via credit cards
- EFTPOS Either savings account or credit cards
- BPAY biller code and reference are listed on family statements
- EFT Deposit direct to the school's bank account
 - BSB: 085 005 A/c No: 458045040
 - Please quote your Family ID number located on your School Fee Statement
- Centrelink deductions Families can instruct Centrelink to pay the school direct. Forms are available from the front office.
- Over the phone payments using Mastercard or Visa
- Cash
- Cheques will not be accepted
- AMEX will not be accepted

Payment times at school are as follows (unless special arrangements have been made):

■ Monday – Friday 8.30am to 3.15pm

SCHOOL CARD SCHEME 2023

The School Card Scheme is administered by the Department of Education SA. It is an income means tested scheme providing assistance for low-income families towards the cost of education expenses.

For eligible families, St Martin's will grant the family "Lower Income School Fee".

2023 School Card application forms will be available from the School Office in 2023. Families applying for School Card must continue to make payments prior to its approval.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT/HARDSHIP

Families who are experiencing difficulty in meeting their financial liability, and are not eligible for school card, are asked to contact the school immediately to discuss the situation. All discussions and ensuing arrangements are treated in the strictest confidence.

A Fee Remission in addition to the Lower Income School Fee is available to families who are experiencing extreme financial difficulty. Applications for Fee Remission are available from the Business Manager's Office and are assessed by the Finance Committee. Families will be required to substantiate the application with documentation such as statement of assets and liabilities, each parent's tax returns, last 3 pay slips and Centrelink documents, etc.

EXTRA CURRICULAR CHARGES

Camp, choir and sporting fees will be charged separately. Please note additional charges are not included in direct debit and credit card payment plans.

WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT

St Martin's Catholic Primary School requires one term's notice in writing to the Principal if you intend withdrawing your child before graduating in Year 6. Failure to meet this requirement will result in one term's fee penalty. All accounts must be fully paid prior to the student leaving the school.

OVERDUE ACCOUNTS AND LATE FEE

All fee accounts are due and payable by the due dates provided on the Payment Option Agreement Form unless prior arrangements have been made to make payments by instalments or other means.

If you are unable to pay school fees prior to the due date, please notify the school immediately.

Families who fall behind in the payment of fees are urged to contact the school as a matter of urgency to discuss payment options. Overdue statements will be forwarded during the year with reminders as are necessary.

Failure to comply with the above will result in the account being passed to the Catholic Education SA's (CESA) Debt Collection team.



TUITION FEES

SIBLING DISCOUNT RATES

2023

NUMBER OF CHILDREN	DISCOUNT RATE
2 nd Child	20%
3 rd Child	40%
4 th Child onwards	100%



FEE PROCESS

FEE PROCESS

- Fees for subsequent year will be approved by the Board during the Business Managers budget presentation in October of each year.
- Approved fees are to be promptly communicated in a clear manner and with total transparency.
 - Included in the fees pack will be
 - Fees Schedule
 - Various payment plan amounts
 - Direct Debit/Credit Card payment forms
- The communication must include the contact details for payment plan forms and fees schedule assistance.
- Updated remission forms for any applications.
- How to access all School Card details (including forms)
- Clear timelines for payment.
- Fees will be billed before the commencement of school year and statements sent home with eldest child by the completion of week 2 term 1of school year.

REMISSION PROCESS

Approved Remission Discounts

- Requesting parents/guardians <u>must</u> complete a remission request form. The form <u>must</u> have all relevant areas/questions answered and all relevant documentation attached.
- Remissions must be processed by either Principal or Business Manager in a confidential and private environment and formally approved by the School Finance Committee.
- Remission will be applied based on family income levels, including government assistance and any other relevant financial circumstances.
- Failure to provide required documentation will result in the application being declined.
- Business Manager and/or Principal (subject to approval) to determine the remission amount.
- Remissions budgets to be set at the discretion of the School Board.
- Parents/guardians must enter into a payment schedule that sees the balance owing after remission cleared by the required school deadlines.
- Failure to adhere to these guidelines will mean the remission will be reversed.
- Should a family be provided fee remission and also be approved for School Card, then the Lower Income Tuition Fee will override the remission discount and the remission will be reversed.
- Remission discounts will be applied subject to Principal approval.

FEE COLLECTION PROCESS

The following practises and principles have been adopted by St Martin's for the collection of fees:

Guiding Principles

The school Principal is ultimately accountable for the implementation and adherence to fee collection procedure in schools

The Business Manager is responsible for executing the fee collection process and following the guidelines for fee collection

At all times, parents/guardians should be encouraged to set up plans prior to commencing school.

Enrolment^o

The school must advise parents/guardians that they have a legal responsibility (both jointly and individually)
upon signing the enrolment form to pay all fees and charges owing

Fee Policy Fee Process Appendix C

Statements:

The school will send statements out monthly.

Payment Plans:

- The school must offer flexible payment options and methods to allow regular payments that work for both the school and the debtor.
- All parents/guardians must enter into a payment plan unless paying in full by 1st March.

Monitor Payments:

 The school must regularly (at a minimum monthly) monitor its debtor payments to ensure due dates are being met.

Manage Overdue Debtor Accounts:

When a payment is missed this should be brought to the attention of the debtor promptly and a response sought through either, initial reminder, meeting option or more formal reminder.

Escalation:

- When all reasonable attempts to collect have failed, schools should escalate the debt to either
 - CESA Debt Collection Team
 - This service is accessible once the criteria is met and may incur a service fee
 - Schools are required to demonstrate that they have satisfied the criteria for referral. (refer template 10-CEO Referral Checklist)
 - Signing of the referral form grants permission for the Debt Collection service to manage this debt in its entirety
 - The debt shall remain within the school accounts until such time as it is either paid off or agreed to be written off
 - The CESA Debt Collection service has the authority to escalate the debt to a contracted Debt Collection service. All communication with the Collection Debt service is via the CESA Debt collection service not the school.
 - Court Proceedings
 - In the event that a debt is not recovered, the CESA Debt Recovery service in consultation with the school, may apply to the Director or Assistant Director, Finance and Infrastructure for approval to take the debtor to court.

FEE COLLECTION STEPS

Step 1: 1st Notification - Friendly Reminder (1-3 days after fee due date):

When the debt becomes overdue, the School Finance representative shall give the parent/guardian a courtesy reminder by phoning, emailing, or sending a text message. Contacting them may be enough to get the fee paid, as they may have forgotten about it, or there could be another minor issue that is easily and quickly resolved. The School Finance team shall prepare the notification and shall include banking details and contact information in the reminder to make it easy for the debtor to make payment quickly.

Step 2: Send Notification(s) to parent/guardian (repeat step for all future Notifications):

The School Finance team shall call or send the notification (Attachment 1: Reminder Letter) in a timely manner to the parent/guardian.

Step 3: Update notes in School Finance System:

The School Finance team shall record the date and time, method of communication and comments from the discussion with the parent/guardian if contact was made, in the School Finance System on the Debtor's Account.

Step 4: Parent/guardian receives Notification(s) (repeat for all future Notifications):

The parent/guardian may respond as follows:

4.1. The parent/guardian contacts the school to discuss payment arrangements. The details for the amended Payment Plan should be captured in the Student Payment Plan Workbook.

Fee Policy Fee Process Appendix C

- a) The parent/guardian contacts the School Finance team to discuss the overdue payment. During the discussion, they may request that the current Payment Plan be reviewed and adjusted due to a change in their circumstances.
- b) If a new Payment Plan is agreed, the School Finance team shall prepare a Letter confirming the new Payment
- c) The School Finance team shall send the Letter to the parent/guardian within 48 hours from the discussion and agreement.
- d) The School Finance team shall update the Payment Plan in the School Finance System and amend the Payment Plan details in the Fee Collection Excel Workbook
- 4.2. The parent/guardian makes payment
- 4.3. The parent/guardian does not take any action

Step 5: Download Account Statement from School Finance System:

If the payment remains outstanding or there has been no contact at all from the parent/guardian in response to the friendly reminder, the School Finance team shall download the Account Statement from the School Finance System.

Step 6: 2nd Notification - Overdue reminder (15 days after fee due date):

The School Finance team shall prepare and send a 2nd Notification – Notice of Overdue Fee Account (Attachment 2: Notice of Overdue Fee Account) and include the account statement as a reference. (Refer to step 2 and 3 above)

The School Finance team shall monitor these accounts and send monthly Account Statements.

Step 7: Escalate to School Principal for intervention – 25% of the fee is overdue:

When outstanding fee reaches 25% of annual fee invoiced, and there has been no response from the parent/guardian to all previous communications, the School Finance team shall escalate the account to the School Principal to arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian.

The School Finance team shall provide all the required Account information as reference.

The School Finance team shall monitor these accounts and send monthly Account Statements.

Step 8: Prepare 3rd Notification – Final Notice – 50% of fee is overdue:

If there is still no payment or response from the parent/guardian to all previous communications and overdue fee reaches 50% of annual fee invoiced, the School Finance team shall prepare a Final Notice Letter (Attachment 3: Final Notice), requesting the parent/guardian to make payment within 7 days failing which the account will be handed over to the CEO Debt Collection team.

The School Finance team shall monitor these accounts and send monthly Account Statements.

Step 9: Prepare 4th Notification – Account now with CEO Debt Collection Team (Attachment 4: Account with CEO collection team)

If there is still no payment or response from the parent/guardian seven (7) days after the Final Notice Letter was issued, the School Finance team shall inform the School Principal / Leadership team and prepare a Letter informing the Parent/guardian that their account has now been handed over to the CEO Debt Collection Team for debt recovery.

The School Finance team shall provide all the required Account information including the referral checklist to the CEO Debt Collection team for their further.

Fee Policy Fee Process Appendix C

Reminder of Overdue Fee Account

Date: <insert>

Parent/Guardian Name <insert> Address <insert>

Dear <insert Parent/Guardian name>

RE: OUTSTANDING FEE ACCOUNT <insert account number>

Our records indicate that your account is currently overdue and that the amount of <\$0.00> is outstanding.

We request that you please make payment within seven (7) days from the date of this letter. If payment is not made within the time frame a late fee may be applicable as per the terms in our Fee Schedule.

If you have any queries relating to your account, please contact us on <insert telephone number>.

If you have paid this account within the last few days, please disregard this letter.

Thanking you in advance.

Jamie Andrews Business Manager St Martin's Catholic Primary School **Notice of Overdue Fee Account**

Date: <insert>

Parent/Guardian Name <insert>

Address <insert>

Dear <insert Parent/Guardian name>

RE: OUTSTANDING FEE ACCOUNT <insert account number>

We refer to our earlier correspondence dated <insert date of last correspondence> regarding your account from our Finance team. To date we have not received payment or contact from you. A current copy of your account statement is attached for your reference.

As per our Fee Schedule a <\$0.00> late payment fee has now been applied to your account.

We request that you please make payment within seven (7) days from the date of this letter to avoid any further late fee charges.

If you have any queries relating to your account, please contact us on <insert telephone number>.

If you have paid this account within the last few days, please disregard this letter.

Thanking you in advance.

Jamie Andrews **Business Manager** St Martin's Catholic Primary School **Final Notice: Outstanding School Fees**

Date: <insert>

Parent/Guardian Name <insert>
Address <insert>

Dear <insert Parent/Guardian name>

RE: OUTSTANDING SCHOOL FEES <insert account number>

We refer to our letter dated <insert date of last correspondence> regarding your outstanding account, currently totalling <\$0.00>.

<insert school name> has very clear requirements that all Parents/Guardians adhere to the Fee Policy. We wish to resolve this matter as efficiently as possible and without the involvement of our Debt Collection team. We would like to reinforce that it is your responsibility to respond and advise how you intend to address the account.

If you are genuinely in financial difficulties and committed to try to repay the outstanding fees, we are open to discuss alternative payment options that may be available to you. Any discussion regarding your account will be kept in the strictest confidence.

To avoid the School pursuing the use of our Debt Collection team, we request that you either make payment in full or contact us on <insert telephone number> to make alternative payment arrangement within seven (7) days from the date of this letter.

Failing to receive your payment in full or contact from you within the required timeframe, will result in your account being handed over to our Debt Collection team, and cost incurred as a result of this will be recoverable from you.

Thanking you in advance.

Jamie Andrews Business Manager St Martin's Catholic Primary School Account with Catholic Education Office (CEO) Debt Collection Team

Date: <insert>

Parent/Guardian Name <insert>

Address <insert>

Dear <insert Parent/Guardian name>

RE: OUTSTANDING SCHOOL FEES <insert account number>

We refer to our Final Notice letter dated <insert date of last correspondence> regarding your

outstanding account, currently totalling <\$0.00>.

We now inform you that your account has now been handed over to the Catholic Education

Office Debt Collection Team.

If you are genuinely in financial difficulties and committed to try to repay the outstanding

fees, kindly contact the Debt Collection team at <insert contact details> who will discuss

payment options available to you.

Any discussion regarding your account will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Your sincerely,

Jamie Andrews

Business Manager

St Martin's Catholic Primary School