

## ***Fee Policy – applicable from 2017***

**Formulated by:** Finance Committee

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with CEM Policy 2.27 – School Fees, the Ave Maria College *Enrolment Policy (2016)*, and the Ave Maria College *Financial Viability Policy (2011)*. Policies referred to may be amended, updated, replaced or retired during the life of this policy.

It is the policy of Ave Maria College to charge fees and levies to parents on an annual basis prior to the beginning of each school year.

**Definitions:** For the purpose of this policy, “**Parents**” means a natural or adoptive parent or parents of a child, the legal guardian or guardians of a child or any other person/persons who have assumed responsibility for a child and for the payment of fees and levies relating to a current student, prospective student or past student.

### **1. FEES**

- 1.1 Tuition Fees will be charged in regard to each student enrolled at the College.
- 1.2 Tuition Fees will be set by the Board of Governance in November of each year for the following school year.
- 1.3 As far as is practicable, the Tuition Fee will cover, but not limited to, the supply of educational instruction, compulsory excursions/incursions/ activities and most classroom requirements. A component of the Tuition Fee will be used for Capital purposes. Parents will remain liable to cover the costs of uniforms and booklist items. The purchase of materials by Parents for elective subjects where individual projects occur may be required during the year.
- 1.4 Once set Tuition Fees will not be altered during the year in which they apply except for extraordinary circumstances.
- 1.5 Parents will be notified in writing each December of the amount of the Tuition Fees for the following year.

### **2. LEVIES**

- 2.1 Levies will be set by the Board of Governance in November of each year for the following school year.
- 2.2 Levies will be set at a level to recover expected costs. In most cases a Levy will only be charged in relation to a high cost elective subject, such as Outdoor Education.
- 2.3 Once set, Levies will not be altered during the year in which they apply except for extraordinary circumstances
- 2.4 Parents will receive a Fee Statement in December of each year outlining the Levies payable for the following school year.
- 2.5 Levies relating to non-compulsory activities may be charged throughout the year. Charges will be made based on participation in these activities. Payment of these Levies are required to be made in full within fourteen (14) days of invoice.
- 2.6 Where a student is enrolled in VET/VCAL subject conducted by an external institution, the College will pass on any charge it receives in relation to this course. If a rebate is receivable by the College from the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria in relation to this external course, the amount of this rebate will be passed on and credited against the Parents account.

### **3. DISCOUNTS**

- 3.1 **Multiple Concurrent Enrolments**
  - 3.1.1 A discount of 15% applies for the second child concurrently enrolled at the College.
  - 3.1.2 A discount of 25% applies for any additional children concurrently enrolled in the College.

3.1.3 The discount for multiple concurrent enrolments applies to Tuition Fees only.

### 3.2 Early Settlement

An early settlement discount is offered to Parents who pay in full the total amount invoiced for the year's fees and levies by the conclusion of the first full week of the school year. The rate of discount applicable will be determined by the Finance Committee and communicated with Parents at the time of the annual accounts being distributed. This discount will be calculated based on the Tuition Fee component of the account only

### 3.3 Financial Support

A discount of an amount as determined by the Board of Governance will be given in regard to each student where the parent/s hold a valid Australian Health Care Card or Pension Concession Card and have successfully applied for the Camp, Sport and Excursions Fund.

Where parents approach the College stating financial hardship, the **Financial Hardship Assistance Protocol**, as ratified by the Finance Committee of the College, is to be used.

In cases of extreme hardship, the Principal at their discretion, may elect to issue a bursary. The amount and period covered by this bursary will be nominated by the Principal. A report detailing the number and amount of bursaries issued for the academic year, shall be tabled annually within the Principal's report to the Board of Governance.

## 4. PAYMENT OF FEES AND LEVIES

4.1 By signing the *Enrolment Acceptance Form*, each signatory agrees that they are both jointly and severally responsible for the timely payment of all fees and levies charged during the enrolment of their daughter at the College.

4.2 Parents are required to enter into either a direct debit agreement or a standing credit card authority.

4.2.1 This amount authorized will need to cover all known charges for the year.

4.2.2 Full payment is to be achieved by end of each year.

4.2.3 Parents electing to pay fees in full at the commencement of the school year are exempt from this requirement.

4.2.4 Parents seeking to make payments by means other than by Direct Debit or a Standing Credit Card Authority will need to consult with the Business Manager for approval.

4.2.5 The payment of Fees and Levies by Cash will no longer be accepted.

4.3 Where Parental circumstances change and a change in the responsibility for the payment of future fees and levies occurs,

4.3.1 The College must be notified in writing, using the proforma obtainable from the College.

4.3.2 The effective date of this change must be clearly stated.

4.3.3 The change must be authorized, where practicable, by each party responsible for the payment of past and/or future Fees and Levies.

4.3.4 The change in responsibility for future Fees and Levies will come into effect upon the acceptance of the change, in writing, by the College Principal or the Business Manager.

4.3.5 Where past Fees and Levies are assigned to one party, other than as a result of a court order of which the College is party to, this assignment does not remove the right of the College to seek payment from any party who was responsible for the payment of fees and levies at the time the charge was incurred.

4.3.6 Where there are no current students at the College and fees and levies remain outstanding, the parties responsible for the payment of these amounts are required to enter into a payment plan. Payments are to be made at least monthly, over a period of

time as agreed with the Business Manager. This agreement will be formally approved by the Principal.

- 4.3.7 The College reserves the right to pursue the payment of any outstanding fees and levies through alternative means, including legal action, if acceptable arrangements cannot be agreed to with the Fee Payer/s.
- 4.3.8 Any amount being held in the Family Loan Scheme will be offset against the oldest debt at the time the College notifies acceptance of the change as per 4.3.4. Where there are no outstanding fees or levies, the amount held in the Family Loan Scheme will be treated as per the advice received on the proforma used in clause 4.3.1 and will continue to be held for the duration of the enrolment at the College.

## 5. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 A student applying to be accepted in an extra-curricular activity / tour which incurs costs when outstanding fees/levies exist, either for a prior year and/or arrears for the current year, cannot participate.
- 5.2 Where a student has been accepted into an extra-curricular activity / tour and the parent then fails to continue to meet their fee obligations, the College reserves the right to review the students on-going participation in that activity / tour. The impact on the College of any action it takes in this regard will be cost natural to the College.

## 6. FAMILY LOAN SCHEME

- 6.1 Upon acceptance of an offer for enrolment at the College, Fee Payers will be required to pay an amount for each student into the Family Loan Scheme.
- 6.2 This amount will be held by the College on an interest free basis for the duration of the student's enrolment at the College.
- 6.3 The amount of this interest free loan to the College will be set by the Board of Governance in November of each year, applicable for the following year.
- 6.4 The College reserves the right to withdraw an offer of enrolment where payment of the amount required in relation to the Family Loan Scheme is not received by the due date.
- 6.5 Amounts held in the Family Loan Scheme relating to a student who is leaving the College, will be offset against any outstanding account relating to the departing student at the time of departure.
- 6.6 Amounts held in the Family Loan Account relating to a Year 12 student, will be offset against any outstanding account as at 31 October in the year of completing Year 12.

## 7. ENROLMENT FEE

- 7.1 The College will charge an *Enrolment Confirmation Fee* at the time that an offer of enrolment is made. The amount of this fee will be set by the Board of Governance in November of each year, applicable for enrolment offers made in the following year. (see also Section 12)
- 7.2 The amount of this fee will be credited to each Parent's account/s upon the commencement of the student/s at the College.

## 8. CONFIRMATION OF RETURN FEE

- 8.1 An annual *Confirmation of Return Fee* is included in the Tuition Fee for students in years 7 to 11. (Applicable from 2017).
- 8.2 A *Confirmation of Return Form* will be sent to Parents in August each year. This form will be required to be returned to the College no later than the start of term four in regard to each student enrolled in Years 7 - 11 of the current year.
- 8.3 The amount of this fee will be set by the Board of Governance in November of each year, applicable for the following year.
- 8.4 The amount of this fee will be credited against the following year's fees upon the student/s recommencing their studies in the following year.

- 8.5 Where notice of withdrawal is provided in accordance with this Policy (see Section 12) the *Confirmation of Return Fee* will be credited / refunded.

## 9. STUDENTS COMMENCING DURING TERM

- 9.1 Students commencing at Ave Maria College mid-term will be required to pay full fees for that term where the term is half complete or less.
- 9.2 Where the term is more than half-complete, pro rata fees will be charged on a weekly basis for that term.
- 9.3 Full fees will be applicable for any remaining terms for that year. All levies will be charged as per clause 9.1 and 9.2.

## 10. PROLONGED PERIODS OF ABSENCE

Special arrangements for periods of absence greater than 18 weeks will be determined on an individual basis, following consultation with the Principal. Any outstanding fees or levies that exist at the time of commencing a period of prolonged absence are expected to be paid in full before the period of prolonged absence commences, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Business Manager and approved by the Principal.

## 11. EXCHANGE STUDENTS

- 11.1 Ave Maria College is supportive of International Exchange Student Programs.
- 11.2 The determination of tuition fees will be considered on a case by case basis. Exchange students will be expected to contribute towards the costs of excursions and camps and for any elective activities that they are to participate in.
- 11.3 Students from Ave Maria College embarking on an Exchange Student Program
- 11.3.1 Will be charged a holding deposit, equivalent to 25% of the annual Tuition Fee. The holding deposit will be credited against the Fee Payer's account upon the return of the student to the College.
- 11.3.2 The student's place at Ave Maria College will be guaranteed on her return:
- Subject to all outstanding fees or levies at the time of this period of exchange being paid in full prior to the student leaving the College, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Business Manager and approved by the Principal
  - On the condition that the exchange does not exceed twelve months, and the student does not remain overseas in excess of the period of the exchange.
- 11.3.3 One term's notice will be required if the student elects not to return to the College at the conclusion of the exchange period. An Exit Fee will be charged where insufficient notice is received by the College.

## 12. STUDENTS EXITING BEFORE COMPLETION OF YEAR 12

The College bases its staffing and other related educational expenses on the student population as indicated by the Confirmation of Return forms received at the beginning of Term Four each year. In addition to Confirmation of Return the College also relies on the Confirmation of Acceptance of new enrolments that it has received.

Where a student exits the College mid-term, or where an enrolment offer has been accepted by a Parent/s and then the applicant is withdrawn prior to commencing at the College, or a Confirmation of Return has been submitted and later withdrawn, it cannot be assumed that another student is waiting to fill the position. The College is committed to its annual expenditure and cannot reasonably consider refunds in these cases.

- 12.1 For new enrolments, where a position is accepted and at a later date this acceptance is revoked prior to commencing at the College, the amount paid in relation to the Enrolment Fee and the amount paid to the Family Loan Scheme shall be forfeited to the College. The Principal may at

their discretion, elect to refund part or the whole of the amount held in the Family Loan Scheme. The Principal will need to take into account the circumstances of the withdrawal, the likelihood of the vacancy being filled in the short term (4 weeks) and the costs borne by the College in the administration of the enrolment process.

- 12.2 For existing students a minimum of ten weeks' notice, in writing, advising of the last day in attendance at the College is required.
  - 12.2.1 In the absence of such notice, an Exit Fee equal to one quarter of a full year's fees will be required to be paid.
  - 12.2.2 The Exit Fee will be charged on a pro-rata basis where a reduced period of notice is given prior to the student's departure from the College.
  - 12.2.3 There will be no refund for extra-curricular activities or for external charges relating to VET or VCAL.
  - 12.2.4 No proportion of the current term's fees and levies will be reimbursed.
  - 12.2.5 No refund will be given for any elective activities which have already been undertaken by the student, or for any resources issued.
  - 12.2.6 A credit will be issued for elective levies relating to those activities which have not yet been accessed or for resources not yet issued.
  - 12.2.7 The College reserves the right to transfer any funds held in the Family Loan Scheme relating to the exiting student to offset any outstanding account.
  - 12.2.8 The Principal, at their discretion, may elect to reduce or waive the exit fee, after taken into account the circumstances of the withdrawal, the likelihood of the vacancy being filled in the short term (4 weeks) and the costs borne or committed to by the College.
  - 12.2.9 Parents may appeal to the Principal in writing should they believe that their circumstances are exceptional.

## 13. COLLECTION GUIDELINES

- 13.1 Parents acknowledge their obligation to pay fees and levies, as charged, for the provision of educational services to their daughter/s and to adhere to the policies of the College when they sign the Enrolment Application Form. Parents commit to pay fees and levies when they sign the Enrolment Acceptance Form.
- 13.2 Normal terms of payment are quarterly in advance. Quarterly instalments are due by 4.00 pm on the Friday of the first full week of each term. The College also offers the option to enter into an approved payment scheme on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.
- 13.3 The full amount of the year's fees and levies will be shown on the initial account.
- 13.4 Amounts payable in connection with charges for extra-curricular activities, non-compulsory events, the supply of non-standard materials or the reimbursement to the College for lost or damaged equipment, will be charged as necessary. Payment for these charges will be required within fourteen days of the invoice being issued unless otherwise stated on the invoice.
- 13.5 The Business Manager will monitor the payment of fees and levies and make contact with Parents when they fail to meet their obligations. The Finance Committee will provide support and guidelines for the commission of this task.
- 13.6 Payments made against accounts will be applied to the oldest outstanding amount.

## 14. STANDARD COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The fee collection process is as follows:

- 14.1 In December of each year, the College will forward to Parents an invoice/statement for the following year.
- 14.2 A message reminding Parents to contact the College if there are difficulties meeting fee and levy payments will be included on each statement.
- 14.3 Parents with an outstanding balance will be issued a statement no less than once a term, showing the outstanding balance as at that point of time.
- 14.4 If payment is not received, contact will be made with the Parents.

- 14.5 In the absence of a suitable response the matter will be forwarded to a collection agency.
- 14.6 Legal processes may be used to recover money owing if all other collection procedures fail. The College reserves the right to recover legal costs incurred in the course of recovering outstanding debts.

## 15. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES – FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

A reduction in the amount of Tuition Fees payable due to financial hardship may be considered upon receipt of a formal written application/statutory declaration from the Parents using the College standard application form. Application forms are available upon request from the Finance Office. Supporting documentation must be included with the application.

- 15.1 Any application received without a complete and executed statutory declaration will be declined. The statutory declaration must be signed by all parties to the account.
- 15.2 The Principal and the Business Manager will meet to consider each application on its individual merits taking into account:
  - 15.2.1 Data available regarding past payment practices, discounts received and support the family may have given the College by other means, e.g. Canteen, College functions and events.
  - 15.2.2 After verification of amounts received for Austudy, the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, Family Allowance or other sources.
- 15.3 The calculation of the level of assistance available will be based on the formula as approved by the Finance Committee.
- 15.4 Financial Hardship Assistance can be granted in relation to College Tuition Fees only. Assistance is not available for payment of Subject Levies, books, stationery or uniforms, extracurricular activities or external charges.
- 15.5 Assistance is provided on an annual basis. New documentation will be required for subsequent years.
- 15.6 The Business Manager will write to the Parents advising them of the outcome of their application.
- 15.7 The College will monitor each family who receives Financial Hardship Assistance in order to ensure that agreed payment schemes are adhered to.
- 15.8 Where the College becomes aware that information supplied on the statutory declaration is false, the matter will be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration as to the repercussions. Where the Finance Committee is satisfied that a fraudulent act has taken place, the matter may be referred to the relevant authorities, e.g. Victoria Police, for action.

## 16. THE ROLE OF THE PARISH PRIEST / Primary School Principals

Parish Priests / Principals are invited to refer families whom they believe would qualify for fees assistance. Where there is a belief that there may be exceptional circumstances that might require a variation to the standard procedures, the Parish Priest / Principal will refer the matter to the Principal who will personally interview the family. The Principal will make the ultimate decision as to the basis upon which the family will be accepted and will convey this to the family in writing.

A copy of this policy will be forwarded to Parish Priests and Principals of feeder schools.

**Ratified:** Board of Governance

**Date:** 2001, Revised 2004, 2006, 2011, 24 March 2015, 24 November 2015, 22 November 2016