



# SCHOOL FEE and COLLECTION POLICY

We at St Thomas More Primary School strive to offer quality and inclusive education in the Catholic tradition. This provides equity of opportunity for all to fully participate in learning and the life of the school, developing the skills and attributes of a life-long learner and children with a self-belief and understanding of how to contribute to the Church and society, in their time as students and in the broader community.

In order to provide the high-quality education that the broader community demands, there is a necessity for BCE schools to charge fees and levies. Without these fees and levies and other support from the local community, the operation of BCE schools would not be viable.

When enrolling children at St Thomas More parents are aware of our school fee structure and the responsibility they are undertaking for the full payment of fees and levies as part of signing the enrolment agreement.

Fees and Levies collected at St Thomas More Primary School are used for the following purposes which are aligned to the Vision and Mission of the St Thomas More Primary School to:

- Provide teaching, administrative, classroom support and facilities
- Provide essential resources, materials, facilities and equipment
- Assist with providing activities such as excursions
- Support the St Thomas More Primary School building program
- Maintain buildings, grounds and other facilities

For those families experiencing short or long-term genuine inability to pay fees, we are committed to providing support to ensure that enrolment is not compromised. Please contact the Principal and/or our Finance Officer for further information concerning the concession application process.

## SCHOOL FEE and LEVY COLLECTION PROCESS

1. School fees and levies are charged on a **term** basis during the second week of the term in accordance with the School Fees and Levies Schedule (available on our website).
2. Fees are due to be paid within 14 days of the issue of the Statement of Fees and Levies. The due date will be noted on the statement.
3. Where a parent/guardian believes financial circumstances have arisen that will prevent or delay the payment of the school fee account, a variety of options are available:

### a. EXTENSION OF TIME

If an extension is required, please contact the school finance office prior to the due date.

### b. PAYMENT PLANS

Payment of the school fee and levy account by regular instalments. All payment plans must ensure that the account is cleared by the last day of the school year or as negotiated with the Principal and / or our Finance Officer. Payment plans need to be negotiated annually to ensure they reflect the current fee schedule. In the case where a payment plan does not cover the total fee and levy account, contact will be made with the family, via telephone or email, outlining any outstanding fees.

### c. FEE CONCESSIONS

In cases of financial hardship an application may be made for a fee concession.

- (i) Concession applications are accepted at the commencement of each year or at any point initiated by the family. Concessions are issued for a maximum period of 12 months within a calendar year. Consideration for a subsequent 12-month period will require a new application.
- (ii) A compassionate and just approach under the mission and values of Brisbane Catholic Education and St Thomas More Primary School is used when reviewing applications. The same process is adopted by all Brisbane Catholic Education schools/colleges for assessing eligibility.
- (iii) Concession application forms are available at the school finance office.
- (iv) All matters are dealt with on a confidential basis.

#### **4. RECOVERY OF UNPAID FEES**

In fairness to families who pay their school fees regularly and on time, our schools/colleges will follow up all overdue school fee accounts.

- a. A reminder statement/notice/letter will be issued within 7 days to any family who has not settled their school fee account by the due date where a payment plan or other arrangements are not in place.
- b. If payment or a suitable response is not received within 7 days of the reminder statement, contact with the parent will be made via telephone. If a family cannot be reached, a letter/email will be sent.
- c. In the circumstances where after 7 days from this second reminder satisfactory arrangements have not been reached, a letter/email with a meeting time with the Principal will be sent. The intent of this meeting is to come to some arrangement regarding the payment of outstanding fees.
- d. If after two weeks from this scheduled meeting time no satisfactory arrangements have not been reached, the account may be sent to the St Thomas More Primary School Debt Collection agency. In serious cases, where there is clear capacity to pay outstanding fees, legal options may be pursued by St Thomas More Primary School
- e. Legal costs, direct debit rejection fees and any debt collection costs or other costs incurred will be at the family's expense.

#### **AGREED PAYMENT PLAN**

As mentioned in point 3b above, St Thomas More Primary School offers families the opportunity of paying the school fee account by regular instalments over the course of the year. All Agreed Payment Plans must be organised to include a regular schedule that will clear the school fees account by the last day of the school year. Any extensions to an Agreed Payment Plan must be negotiated with the Principal and/or Finance Officer. To establish an Agreed Payment Plan, forms are available on the St Thomas More Primary School website, Parent Portal or from the St Thomas More Primary School finance office.

#### **LATE START ENROLMENT**

New students entering St Thomas More Primary School after the commencement of the term may be charged on a pro-rata basis for the remaining weeks of the term where appropriate at the Principal and/or Finance Officer's discretion.

#### **WITHDRAWAL OF ENROLMENT**

Fees will be payable for the whole term in which the enrolment is terminated. For a reduction in fees a written request must be made to the Principal at the time of notification and may be granted at the Principal's discretion.

Student text books, library books and laptops and all accessories are to be returned to the School. If any fees remain outstanding, they will be payable as per the normal payment terms and where appropriate, any fees in credit will be refunded.

#### **EXTENDED LEAVE / HOLDING AN ENROLMENT PLACE**

Fees will be payable for the whole term in which extended leave is taken. For a reduction in fees a written request must be made to the Principal at the time of notification and may be granted at the Principal's discretion. Consideration will be given to the length of the break, the nature of the leave, the time the student has been at the college, the number of previous leave occurrences, and the existence of student waiting lists.

**For further clarification regarding the above school fee and levy collection process, please contact the St Thomas More Primary School Finance Secretary.**