



Fee Collection Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The continuing provision of quality Lutheran Education for all students Living Waters Lutheran School Incorporated requires that all parent(s) / caregivers(s) assume responsibility for the payment of school fees and levies as and when they fall due.

Objectives:

To reduce current outstanding school fees of Living waters Lutheran School through reasonable and effective credit management.

Aims:

- To provide the Principal and Finance Manager with a procedure which will bring early attention to those families who may have a problem meeting school fee obligations.
- To ensure parent(s) /caregiver(s) are aware that special concessions and discounts on school fees and levies are available to those suffering genuine financial hardship.
- To provide assistance to allow the Principal to determine the appropriate level of concessions to be granted in each circumstance so that consistency is maintained.
- To provide a mechanism which will allow for the collection of outstanding school fees from those parent(s) / caregiver(s) who do not abide by the policy guidelines.
- To put in place guidelines that creates an open channel of communication between families and the Principal.
- To keep school fees as low as possible for all parent(s)/caregiver(s) of children attending Lutheran Schools thus making Lutheran Education more accessible to all families of the Alice Springs community and surrounds.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

School Council:

The Living Waters Lutheran School Council acknowledges that, although no child will be denied a Lutheran education because of the inability to pay school fees, it is the responsibility of the Council to collect the fees owing by those families able to pay. The Council will attempt to balance Pastoral Care for families and individuals with justice for the school community.

Level of School Fees and Charges:

- While the commonwealth and State Grants provide some income for Lutheran schools the other major source of income is from fees. Since the School is part of Lutheran Education Australia, the fees are affordable, and enable the School to provide relevant programs, specialised resources and qualified staff. The payment of fees is the shared responsibility of all families.
- School fees are charged per student and include tuition fees, and a voluntary building levy to assist with capital costs such as renovations and repayment of loans.
- School fees are set annually by a resolution of the members of the Alice Springs Lutheran Church based on the recommendation of the School Council. These fees are set at the General Meeting of the Incorporation which occurs in either October or November of the preceding year. The fees may also be varied by resolution of the School Council.
- Families are officially advise of any fee change.
- Sibling discount percentages are endorsed by the Alice Springs Lutheran Church.
- The level of school fees at any one time is available upon enquiry of the Finance Manager.
- All foreseeable fees and charges have been included in the school fees amount however, from time to time other specific items may be charged to student fees as well, such as assessment fees, camp charges and outside of school activities, are reviewed and determined by the Principal.

Scholarships:

Kwatja Etatha Scholarship Fund is available to Indigenous students currently enrolled or wishing to enrol at our School. The guidelines of the awarding funds from this fund will be detailed in a separate policy document.

Parent(s)/Caregiver(s):

The person enrolling the student is responsible for payment of the account in relation to fee payment as agreed to on the contract of enrolment. Parent(s) / Caregiver(s) are responsible for reading all information relating to the contract of enrolment when accepting the conditions of enrolment.

Responsibility for Payment of Accounts:

- It is expected that where there are more than one parent or caregiver of the student at the time of enrolment, that all parties will sign the Acceptance Offer and have that signature witnessed on the Acceptance Offer.
- It is understood that all parties to the Acceptance Offer shall be jointly and severally liable for payment of all fees and charges levied by the School from time to time.
- Notwithstanding that one or other of a Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) assumes responsibility for payment of fees, the School views this as an arrangement between the Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) only and reserves the right to recover outstanding fees from another Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) should any reasonable attempts to collect payment not be successful.
- During any period in which a student is absent from the School, the parent(s)/caregiver(s) will continue to be liable for the fees and other charges payable.

Change in the Relationship between Parent(s)/Caregiver(s):

Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) must inform the Principal or the Finance Manager if there is a change in their relationship with each other since signing the Enrolment contract (eg divorce or separation). Unless otherwise directed, the Principal will require that a new Acceptance Offer be completed by the person who is to assume the obligation of paying school fees.

3. SCHOOL POLICY STATEMENT FOR FEE COLLECTION**Living Waters Lutheran School Policy Values (relevant to this policy):**

Christ centred, love, compassion and respect.

Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) have a responsibility and an obligation to pay school fees and levies according to the Parent Handbook. No student desiring a Lutheran education should be excluded from a Lutheran school because of his/her parent(s)/caregiver(s) inability to pay the prescribed fee in whole or in part as a result of genuine financial hardship.

Consequences of the policy statement:

1. All parent(s)/caregiver(s) are to be informed of this policy upon student enrolment, and must agree in writing to abide by its terms.
2. Concessions for school fees and levies are available in accordance to the Fee Concession Policy. Any other concessions are subject to approval by the Principal and Finance Manager. Each family will be judged confidentially on its specific circumstances. In arriving at this fee, the Principal should have in mind a responsibility towards those families who are making sacrifices to pay fees.
3. Where concessions have been granted, they shall be reviewed annually to ensure that the basis for the concession remains applicable.
4. Parent(s)/caregiver(s) whose fees are in arrears and who do not seek a fees concession will be subject to the School's collection procedures which are stated in the following pages .
5. When a student is to be withdrawn from the School or if an enrolment is to be cancelled, parent(s)/caregiver(s) are required to give one term's notice, in writing, before the withdrawal or cancellation date. Parent(s)/caregiver(s) who do not give such a period of notice will be liable to forfeit any reduction or refund in the term's fees in lieu of notice.

4. GUIDELINES FOR THE COLLECTION OF SCHOOL FEES

1. All matters related to school fee reductions and /or inability to pay school fees are treated as confidential.
2. The Parent Handbook will contain information about all fees and will outline the School's fee schedule (including payment terms, family discounts, and available concessions).
3. An acknowledgment of responsibility for payment of school fees will be included in the agreement that is signed on enrolment.
4. An understanding to pay all school fees as and when they become due will be in the Acceptance of Offer signed by the parent(s)/caregiver(s) of those students offered enrolment at Living Waters Lutheran School.
5. The Acceptance letter confirming enrolment will remind parent(s)/caregiver(s) of the due date for school fees payment. It will also ask that they contact the Finance Manager if they experience difficulty meeting

these terms in the first instance or at any other time during their child's/children's education at Living Waters Lutheran School.

6. Accounts should be mailed out by the 3rd week of first term, or on commencement, requiring payment within 14 days.
7. Fees are billed and payable annually between Jan – Feb or on commencement.
8. Regular payments can be made (weekly/fortnightly/monthly/per term) by way of either Direct Debit, Direct Deposit, mail, telephone, or in person (by cheque, cash or EFTPOS) at the Reception.
9. A Fee Concession Policy is already in place at the School offering a 75% reduction in school fees to holders of a Centrelink Pension Concession Card or a Centrelink Health Care Card.
10. All parent(s)/caregiver(s) with accounts of 30 days overdue who have not contacted the school and do not have a payment plan should receive a copy of "Urgent Notice – Overdue Accounts". (See Annex1)
11. If no payment is received or contact made with the school within 14 days of sending the "Urgent Notice – Overdue Account" letter a follow up Phone Call should be made by the Finance Manager or Finance Assistant to ascertain whether the family have received the reminder notice and to inquire as to how the overdue account is to be finalised. Some suggestions to assist with the phone calls can be found in Annex 3.
12. If there is still no action to settle the overdue account the matter should be referred to the Principal who will consider any local knowledge and information from the Church Pastor and Council Chairperson, after which The 'Final Demand – Overdue Account" letter (See Annex 2) should be sent. This letter states that if the amount is not paid within 14 days, or if no immediate contact is made with the school. The matter will be handed over to our collection agency.
13. If no response or reply is following from this second letter within 14 days, the matter is to be referred to the Principal, who may then, as a final course of action, place responsibility for collection in the hands of the Lutheran Schools Association's preferred debt collection agency (Australian Credit Management).
14. Finance Managers must ensure that the school accounting system accurately reflects each family's current fee liability and any concessions granted. For families who have arranged to pay weekly or monthly etc, a record of individual payment plans should be maintained.
15. All queries relating to outstanding debt are to be appropriately addressed by the Finance Manager or their delegate in order to recover such debt.

ANNEX 1

date

Dear

Urgent notice – overdue account

Your school account is overdue for payment and is outside our fee payment guidelines.

We kindly ask that you arrange payment immediately.

Yours sincerely,

ANNEX 2

date

Dear,

Final demand – overdue account

We again remind you that your account with the school is overdue for payment and well outside our collection guidelines.

Payment is required within 7 days of the above date. If there is a problem, again I ask you to contact the school and discuss this matter with me directly. If you do not contact the school to settle the account as requested, it is school policy to place the debt with the Australian Credit Management for collection. In accordance with the conditions of enrolment that you signed, you are liable for the payment of all fees charged by the school, including any costs incurred in the recovery of such fees, should the need arise.

We strongly suggest you attend to this matter immediately.

Yours sincerely,

ANNEX 3

TELEPHONE CALLS – FEE COLLECTION

Step 1: Identify every person you talk to on the telephone. Never ASSUME you are talking to the right person.

Step 2: Identify yourself. Use your name and school, overdue accounts department.

Step 3: Remind the person that the school has sent “Urgent Notice” and “Final Demand Notice” with no response to the notices.

Step 4: If there is a problem, advise the customer that the appropriate action will be taken. Then investigate the problem and have it resolved.

Step 5: Is there any reason why an arrangement for payments cannot be made with the school now.

Step 6: If no problem, ASK for a DEFINITE DATE as to when the account will be paid.

Step 7: RESTATE THE DATE to the customer and CONFIRM that payment will be EXPECTED no later than that date.

Step 8: Record the commitment and date for follow up.

Step 9: If arrangement is not adhered to, the matter will be placed in the hands of a debt collection agency.