

With Jesus Christ as our inspiration and guide, we are called to provide high-quality Catholic education in the Diocese of Bathurst'

DIOCESAN FEE RELIEF APPLICATION

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Catholic social teaching and tradition echo the Gospel imperative of a 'preferential option for the poor' and the Catholic school sector's practice has been to find a place for families who support its ethos but are unable to participate in a Catholic school community without financial assistance.

Financial assistance is a tangible way for our schools to provide opportunities for the financially less fortunate families within our community to enrol their child at a Catholic school. 'No child should be denied a Catholic education because of genuine financial hardship.'

For the purpose of providing Fee Relief the definition of genuine financial hardship is made available as follows:

A situation where a family is unable, reasonably, because of illness, unemployment or other reasonable cause, to discharge their financial obligations to pay school fees, rather than an unwillingness to do so. Financial hardship can be of limited or long term duration.

HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE & CONFIDENTIALITY

Families in genuine financial hardship will be afforded appropriate assistance in a dignified and confidential manner. Interactions will be respectful, just, compassionate and sympathetic. Families who have the capacity to pay fees and who are not in genuine financial hardship have an obligation to pay fees and will be pursued for non-payment.

The Principal of each Diocesan school is required to ensure that all personnel involved in school fees management maintain strict confidence and respect for the circumstances, dignity and privacy of families. It should be noted that teaching staff do not have access to the status of a family's school fee balance or their financial arrangements with the school.

FEE RELIEF APPLICATIONS

Upon formal application at the time of enrolment or when a family experiences financial hardship or difficulty, Fee Relief may be applied. Application for this assistance is sought by families through completion of the Fee Relief Form ([Appendix 1](#)) in conjunction with an interview with the Principal.

The Principal will determine the portion of fees to be extended or waived on compassionate or financial hardship grounds. Concessions may be granted for up to one year, when the account will be reviewed to determine the requirement for further assistance.

FEE RELIEF IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FAMILY

Where a family, with children in more than one Diocesan School, makes an Application for Fee Relief in a financial hardship situation; a Diocesan approach to the assessment may be applied. Prior to assessing the Fee Concession Application, the Principal of the 'eldest child' will advise the family of this methodology in assisting families. Generally, the Principal of the eldest child will be

the point of contact for the family on behalf of the other schools; however, the family may elect to speak to the Principal of another sibling. The purpose of fee relief in consideration of the family allows families to attend only one interview and provide one set of documentation, thereby endeavouring to reducing stress on the family. It should be noted that all schools involved with the family will have a confidential recorded note of financial arrangements in the school’s administration system.

In some instances it may be necessary to involve all stakeholders in Fee Relief Application decision making. If this is the case, it will occur in a committee style format, with the members being made up of the Principals of all schools where the children are enrolled, the Parish Priest and/or relevant officers of the Catholic Education Office.

In cases where a family’s school fee account has been escalated to the Catholic Education Office for collection, any account in another Diocesan school will also be referred irrespective of its status.

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- Diocesan Governance Framework
- Diocesan Enrolment Policy
- Diocesan Privacy Policy
- Diocesan Standard Collection Notice
- Diocesan Professional Code of Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People

Date of Implementation	January 2016
Date of Last Review	October 2015
Date for Next Review	2018



APPLICATION FOR FEE RELIEF (APPENDIX 1)

The Principal of each Diocesan school is required to ensure that all personnel involved in school fees management maintain strict confidence and respect for the circumstances, dignity and privacy of families. It should be noted that teaching staff do not have access to the status of a family's school fee balance or their financial arrangements with the school.

I/We advise that my family has circumstances of genuine financial hardship necessitating an Application for Fee Relief.

In making this application, I/We acknowledge the following conditions:

- On submission of this form we must seek to make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Principal at a mutually convenient time.
 - I/We understand that in the case where I/we have children in more than one school in the Diocese, this appointment should be made with the Principal of my/our eldest child, however, I/we may elect to have the matter dealt with by a Principal of a younger child.
 - I/We understand that only one Principal will manage the matter and will keep all parties informed.
 - In some instances it may be necessary to involve all stakeholders in Fee Relief Application decision making. If this is the case, it will occur in a committee style format, with the members being made up of the Principals of all schools where the children are enrolled, the Parish Priest and/or relevant officers of the Catholic Education Office.
- If the Application for Fee Relief is successful we will be notified in writing confirming the details of the relief granted.
- Any payment plan established as a result of lodging this Application for Fee Relief will require the lodgement of a Direct Debit or Centrepay Authority.
- An annual review of any Fee Relief will be required.
- I/We are required to inform the school if a change to our financial situation occurs whereby I/We are in a position to recommence payment of their school fees.

With reference to financial hardship or difficulty currently being experienced, please outline the reasons for your request for Fee Relief:

FAMILY DETAILS				
PARENT/CARERS NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS				
Parent's Name				
Address				
Phone AH		Phone BH		Mobile
Parent's Name				
Address				
Phone AH		Phone BH		Mobile
CHILD/CHILDREN NAME, SCHOOL AND YEAR DETAILS				
Child's Name				
School		Year Group		
Child's Name				
School		Year Group		
Child's Name				
School		Year Group		
Child's Name				
School		Year Group		
Child's Name				
School		Year Group		
Child's Name				
School		Year Group		

I/We **consent** to details of the Application for Fee Relief being provided to the Principal of other school/s that my child/children attend.

Parent(s)/Carer(s) Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Parent(s)/Carer(s) Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: / /

In support of your application, please include as much information as possible. For example: attach copies of any relevant material eg ATO Income Tax Assessment Notification/Health Card/Pay Slip/Centrelink Statement.

Please note that following an initial assessment of your application, you may be required to provide further information in regard to your financial situation.