

# PARISH SCHOOLS OFFICE – TWEED HEADS

*An Apostolic Work of St Joseph's Parish, Tweed Heads*

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## SCHOOL FEES ASSISTANCE POLICY

This policy was revised by the St Joseph's Parish School Office (PSO) in October 2017 and is effective from 7 December 2017.

St Joseph's Parish Tweed Heads are committed to providing a Catholic education to all *Catholic children* whose parent/s or guardian/s desire it. We are also aware that some parent/s or guardian/s experience financial hardship. In spite of this, we will always endeavour to ensure that no catholic student from within the Parish be denied a place at our schools because parents are genuinely unable to pay full fees.

We have in place a system of fees concession which is available on application to any parent/s or guardian/s of a Catholic student. These fees concessions are determined on the basis of a just and equitable formula reflecting financial hardship. Any fee reduction is looked at in terms of the financial situation, encompassing both income and assets, of the family concerned, their responsibility to full-fee paying parent/s or guardian/s and the efforts they make to meet their commitments.

There is an expectation that all families will meet out-of-pocket expenses towards their child's education. These expenses include (but not limited to) parish building levy, books and resources costs, computer fees.

*The acceptance by parent/s or guardian/s of a position at one of our schools for a non-Catholic student assumes the ability to pay full fees.*

### Procedure for Fee Assistance

1. Parent/s or guardian/s requesting concessions on their annual school fees must complete an "Application for Fee Assistance form" and provide documentary evidence of income and fixed ongoing costs (i.e. - loan repayments, rent, but excluding general living expenses). 3 month's bank statements, pay slips and/or Centrelink statements are acceptable evidence of income.
2. Self Employed families will also need to provide copies of 2 year's taxation returns as all financial details may go the Parish Schools Office (PSO) for ratification.
3. An interview is required for all fee concession prior to the commencement of school each year. You will need to contact the PSO to arrange a suitable time. For purpose of maintaining confidentiality, all interviews will be conducted at the St Joseph's Parish Administration office in Tweed Heads.
4. The application and interview process is aimed at determining a just and equitable fee which is within the family's ability to pay.

5. Families are reminded that students may be ineligible to attend major overseas trips/excursions unless fees are paid in full or a satisfactory arrangement established with the Parish School Office prior to the commencement of the trip. Payment for the trip by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party (e.g. grandparents) will not be a reason to vary this clause.
6. No allowance is made for repayments on such items as holiday houses, luxury cars, investment houses, pools etc. If a family so decided its priorities to encompass these things, the burden of that decision is the families. Similarly, excessive housing costs cannot be expected to be subsidized by the St Joseph's Community.
7. Once an arrangement has been approved, it is essential that this commitment is honoured in full and on time. It is the responsibility of the parent/s or guardian/s to advise any changes in circumstances that would affect any approved arrangements. All cases will be reviewed by the Parish Schools Office six (6) monthly (or as determined by PSO), where families will again be requested to provide up to date information to support the continuation of approved concessions.
8. No fee reduction will be processed until such time as families have provided the relevant documentation as requested by the Parish Schools Office, failure to provide documentation may result in fee assistance being withdrawn.
9. Families are also responsible to advise the Parish Schools Office in a timely manner of any change to their financial circumstances that may impact on the level of any fee assistance that may have been provisionally agreed.
10. If concessions are required beyond the current year, new arrangements must be negotiated prior to the commencement of each school year.
11. Unless prior arrangements have been made, the schools expect that fees will be paid by the due date. If there is a problem in meeting this deadline, it is the responsibility of the family to contact the PSO to advise and arrange for a suitable payment alternative.
12. Any concessional fee arrangements may be reviewed by the Parish Schools Office. As stated at the outset, the reason for formalizing these procedures is to ensure justice and equity to all. We believe that parent/s or guardian/s will appreciate the necessity for this and will support the efforts being made to provide for every one of our students.
13. The continued enrolment of a student for each successive year is conditional upon families either:
  - a. Meeting full fee commitment for the current year prior to the commencement of the new school year,
  - b. Establishing and maintaining an agreed payment plan with Parish Schools Office prior to the commencement of the school year,
  - c. Completing fee assistance reviews and providing information/documentation to the PSO when requested.
14. No fee assistance will be given to families with split invoices unless it can be demonstrated that each party qualifies for the reduction.

## Confidentiality

The names of families receiving fee assistance will remain confidential to the current administrators of the fee policy (Parish Priest and the Parish Schools Office).

Each situation is different and must be considered on its merits. Assistance is readily and willingly made available to genuine families on the basis of the following general criteria:

- Family Income
- Number of dependants
- General support of the school and its activities
- Special Family Circumstances
- Past history with respect to school costs



Fr. Michael Brady  
Parish Priest



John Klein  
Parish Operations Manager