St Jakobi School Fee Policy

Rationale/ Purpose:
St Jakobi Lutheran School is committed to educational excellence. It is also committed to making Christian education achievable for a wide range of families, and has a variety of strategies in place to assist families financially to enrol their children. To this end we strive to keep fees as low as possible whilst not compromising the educational objectives for the students.

The main sources of income to meet the school budget are:
- Government Grants (State and Commonwealth)
- Fees
- Parish Contribution
- P & F Fundraising
- Donations

Whilst Lutheran schools receive Government funding it is around half the amount of Government schools, therefore fees constitute a necessary and substantial part of the school’s income. Without school fees, the school would not be able to function.

Definition:
The Campus Council administers the affairs of the School. School fees and levies are set by the Finance committee, comprising the Principal, Business Manager, Campus Council Chairperson and Campus Council Vice Chairperson and adopted as a recommendation by the Campus Council. These are reviewed each year, taking into consideration such factors as:
- projected educational, operational and developmental costs for the coming year
- cost of living rises
- allowance for concessional and discounted fees

School fees must be passed at the November meeting for the following year.

At St Jakobi school fees include:
- Tuition fee
- Computer levy
- Curriculum levy
- Capital levy

When enrolling children at St Jakobi parents/caregivers assume a moral and legal obligation to pay the school fees.

Confidentiality
Parents/caregivers are assured that the School Management & Council recognises and respects the privacy of families within the school community and that financial arrangements will be treated with confidentiality and sensitivity. It is expected that families/caregivers make the same commitment to confidentiality.
Procedure:

Enrolment Application and Fee Commitment Forms
During enrolment parents/caregivers are advised of the current year’s fee structure (and the following year if known) and commit themselves, using the Commitment to Pay form, to fulfilling the responsibility of payment of fees. The significance of the commitment will be emphasised and parents/caregivers made aware that, whilst St. Jakobi is foremost a place of education, we must operate as a viable financial business in order to provide the best educational outcomes for students. To be just and fair to other parents/caregivers of the school, St. Jakobi will seek to recoup unpaid fees. However, no child shall be denied enrolment at St. Jakobi Lyndoch Lutheran School and a Christ-centred education because of genuine parental financial hardship. The school will always work with the family to find a sum that is possible, but require families to visit Lutheran Community Care’s financial service as part of this process.

School Card is available to parents/caregivers dependent on income threshold. However some parents/caregivers fall just outside this threshold. Parents/caregivers are invited to make an appointment to visit the Principal or Business Manager to discuss ways St. Jakobi can support them with the payment of fees. All discussions regarding fee remissions, School Card or payment options should be viewed as private and confidential.

Should financial hardship occur unexpectedly, parents/caregivers are invited and encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal or Business Manager to discuss ways St. Jakobi can support them with the payment of fees. The onus is on parents/caregivers to seek support when financial difficulties arise, preferably before the issue gets too large, adding to financial burden. The Fee Commitment form will indicate that one term’s notice is to be given by families to terminate enrolment. If less than a term’s notice is given parents will be issued with an invoice for one full term.

Fee Account Process and Payments
A fee statement shall be sent to the postal address of the parent/caregiver prior to each term preferably four weeks before the due date. A general letter outlining fee responsibilities etc., shall be included with the first statement for the year. (See example Letter A.)

- Fees are to be paid in four equal instalments in advance as follows:
  - Instalment #1 payable no later than 1 week prior to the commencement of the Term 1
  - Instalment #2 payable no later than the last day of Week 9, Term 1
  - Instalment #3 payable no later than the last day of Week 9, Term 2
  - Instalment #4 payable no later than the last day of Week 9, Term 3

When setting the fees, Campus Council will set annually a percentage discount, on the tuition portion of fees, for all fees paid in full for the school year by the first instalment due date.

Fees shall be paid in full by the due dates. Payments may be varied by arrangement with the Principal and/or Business Manager, ensuring that full fees shall be paid by the end of term in which they shall be due. Alternative arrangements for repayment can be agreed upon with payment in full for school year as negotiated with the Business Manager and/or Principal.
Payment Methods
St Jakobi offers several payment options as outlined in the Payment Plan Schedule that is forwarded with the fee schedule at the end of each year to determine which payment method best suits family circumstances. Each option has a due date and compliance with this is required. Payments must always be finalised by the end of the selected payment period.

School fees may be paid by cash, cheque, bank debit or credit card (Mastercard or Visa). EFTPOS facilities are available at the School Office. Credit card payment may be made in person at the school office, by completing the lower portion of the fee statement and returning it to the school office, or by telephoning the school and providing the relevant card details.

A periodical payment authority can also be completed to have fees deducted from a bank account. If payment is made by bank transfer the onus is on parents/caregivers to discontinue payments once the student is no longer enrolled at the school.

NOTE: Payment by cash should only be made in person and a receipt obtained at that time. Where circumstances exist to make it necessary, any claim that school fees were paid in cash must be supported by a school receipt.

Non Payment of Fees
Every endeavour shall be made to recover outstanding fees through discussion and negotiations between the Business Manager/Principal and the parents/caregivers.

The following is a recommended process to recover outstanding fees, including those where one term’s notice has not been given:

1. An account rendered will be forwarded no sooner than 7 days after due date, requesting that account be settled or parents/caregivers contact us within 7 days.
2. Business Manager to follow-up via letter, phone call and sms if no response by extended due date.
3. If still no response after 7 days of extended due date, Business Manager shall contact the parent/guardian and arrange an appointment time to discuss non-payment of fees.
4. If matter is not resolved, or in the absence of communication back, the Principal will forward a letter by email and mail, send an SMS, approach the parent in the school grounds and place a phone call.
5. In the continued absence of communication, the matter will be discussed with the Campus Council Chairperson, with full confidentiality, and contact made by Chairperson via letter and/or phone.
6. Legal action resulting in debt collection will be taken. The Principal, Campus Council Chairperson and Business Manager team, upon reaching this decision as a final course of action, will inform Campus Council prior to the action being implemented. Campus Council will
be furnished with an overview of details, excluding family name. This course of action may be discussed with the LSA Director or the LSA Finance Manager prior to the Campus Council, at the discretion of the Principal or Business Manager.

Fee Remissions
Parent/guardian’s suffering genuine financial hardships, be it from the beginning of the year or part way through the year, are encouraged to contact the Principal and/or Business Manager to present their financial situation. All requests will be treated confidentially and sympathetically. The Principal and/or Business Manager are authorised to offer remissions to genuine cases at their discretion. In the interest of good stewardship proof of financial status may be required. Again, parents/caregivers will be required to go through Lutheran Community Care’s Financial services as part of this process.

After the initial interview with the Principal/Business Manager fee remissions must be applied for in writing. Payment arrangements negotiated will then be binding for the full year unless a remission variation is applied for and granted by the Principal and/or Business Manager. Reminders will be used to encourage families to meet their selected payment obligation regularly and punctually.

Split families
Although parents/caregivers are together at the time of enrolment and both sign the Commitment to Pay Fees form, sadly there are times when parents/caregivers do not remain together. St Jakobi is committed to keeping the students at the forefront of our care, in all discussions, and in supporting parents/caregivers to negotiate fair and amicable financial arrangements.

In regard to the payment of fees, if both parents/caregivers have signed the Enrolment Application and Commitment to Pay Fees forms, then the fee account will be sent to both parents/caregivers, and it is up to parents/caregivers to decide who is paying what. Fees will only become the responsibility of one parent through a court order or if one parent chooses to take on sole responsibility for the fees, at which time a new Enrolment Application and Commitment to Pay Fees forms will be filled out and signed.

In a split family situation any agreement entered into by the school with either parent regarding payment methods, school card or fee remissions remains confidential with that person alone.

Application and Enrolment Fee

Application Administration Fee
A non-refundable $50 fee shall accompany each student’s application for enrolment.

Enrolment Fee
An enrolment deposit of $200.00 is payable by all new families, and provides a guarantee of student and sibling placement and a school commencement date.

Enrolment Fee is refundable:
- at completion of Year 7 by youngest family member.
- at termination of enrolment prior to that time, if one full term’s notice is given.
- if school fee account is paid in full.

Enrolment Fee is not refundable:
- less than 4 school terms of guaranteed school commencement date
- if outstanding fees or monies exist
if less than one full term’s notice is given.

All money will be held in a designated LLL account with interest accrued and held by the school, and the deposit account will be earmarked to the school. A register will be maintained of all deposits received. Any refunds will be forwarded prior to the end of the next term. The Principal has the discretion to determine refund of the enrolment fee on a case by case basis.

Study Leave/Overseas Travel
A school budget is built on the number of students attending in a year. Where parents/caregivers choose to withdraw their children from attending school because of holidays, work, study leave or extended travel, payment will still be required to hold the student’s place. If less than four terms, normal payment is required as the enrolment is being held. If a full school year or more, the school will require 50% of the year’s fees per student to hold a guaranteed place for their return. Families may choose instead to terminate their enrolment, and re-enrol upon their return, however the place is not guaranteed and depends on availability.

Termination of Enrolment by the School
If a student’s enrolment is terminated by the school, this constitutes less than one term’s notice. The current term will not be refunded. The enrolment fee will also be held as part payment for the following term, and the remaining outstanding amount for the term will be invoiced.

Policies to be read in conjunction with this policy:
- Enrolment policy

Date Implemented: March 2014
Date for Review: 2017