



Fees

Lakeside
College

Review Date: May 2021
Next Review: May 2023

Introduction

Fees	
Created by:	Principal Lakeside College
Current version:	1.0
Applicable for:	All Lakeside permanent and fixed term employees, casuals, independent contractors, volunteers and work experience students

Rationale

Lakeside College commits to keeping school fees at manageable levels in order to ensure that no family is denied an education at Lakeside College for financial reasons alone.

Fee levels are set by the Lakeside College Council according to the school's required income in order to provide a quality education. The College Council will establish fees and fee collection practices that are consistent with access and equity priorities.

This policy aims to:

- inform families of the principles and guidelines which govern the collection of school fees and related charges and the provision for negotiated arrangements if families' financial circumstances change.
- assist parents to meet their financial obligations to support their child's learning
- minimise the level of outstanding fees
- ensure financial circumstances are not a barrier to enrolment at Lakeside College

Implementation

Fee Setting

Lakeside College Council is obliged to set fees taking into account external funding situation, College need and the ability of the families to pay. Fees and their payment are discussed with parents at the time of enrolment. Relevant fee policies and guidelines are available upon request.

The College currently operates an 'all inclusive' fee structure which sees parents not bear any additional fees or levies for the following:

- Camps
- Excursions
- Incursions
- Sporting events
- iPads (years Prep to 3)

- Chromebook (Years 4 – 9)
- Stationary and Books (Years Prep to 6)

Lakeside College council will endeavour to finalise the fee structure for the following year by the end of Term 3.

Payment of fees during long term absence

Unless extraordinary circumstances exist to satisfy the College Principal, the College will require families taking long term absence to pay term fees as usual. This is required as the College has budgeted and staffed for full attendance and cannot recoup this loss during the absence of the students.

Financial assistance

It is the accepted obligation of the parents of students attending Lakeside College to initially ensure that they are of sufficient financial standing to support the fee structure specified at the time an application is made. However, the principal will consider any request for fee concessions for families who are experiencing temporary or ongoing financial hardship. The outcome of such requests will be advised in writing and will take into account the following:

- Nature of hardship
- Length of hardship
- The College's financial position
- A family's willingness to do their best to meet their financial obligations,
- A family's willingness to place the payment of the College's fee equal or higher priority to other family commitments to reflect the importance placed on their children's education
- A family's willingness to support the College ethos and College policies at all times

Families with a valid concession card (such as a Health Care Card) and are eligible for Camps, Sport & Excursion Funding (CSEF) from the State Government, will be eligible for Fee assistance of up to 80%.

Discounts

A fee concession of 5% will be granted for payment of a year's fees being made before the end of March.

Families with more than one child attending the College will receive a discount of:

- 25% for the second child
- 50% for the third child
- 75% for the fourth child
- 100% (i.e. free) for the fifth and subsequent child

Scholarships

A number of scholarships are offered by the College at the discretion of the Principal within appropriate budget guidelines.

Fee Collection

The whole year's school fees are payable at the start of the school year. If payment in full is not possible the College strongly encourages all families to enter into a payment plan by way of direct debit, bank transfer or similar, to ensure the whole year's fees are paid within the school year. A statement of fees will be provided to each parent before the commencement of each term.

- a. Unless an arrangement has been agreed to by the College in accordance with any applicable policy or for fee assistance, parents must pay all tuition fees as per the payment terms listed on the Enrolment Terms and Conditions and the Fee Schedule.
- b. Failure to make the payment by the due date will result in the fee collection procedure being followed to ensure the collection of outstanding fee payments.
- c. As part of the fee collection process, the Principal or Delegate, at their discretion may use the following means to facilitate the collection of fees:
 - i. Part 1: Accounts receivable stage
 - Attempt to contact the parents via email, letter or phone to advise the family of their obligations in relation to fees;
 - Meet with the parents to discuss fee obligations and any extenuating circumstances;
 - Reach a payment agreement with the parents in accordance with *one* of the following options where the parents agree to pay to the College the defaulted amount:
 - on a specified future date; or
 - in December of that school year; or
 - spread equally over the remaining months of the school year.
 - The College should record any agreements reached under item c in writing by way of email to the parents, and the parents should confirm their agreement by way of return email.
 - ii. Part 2: Finance Officer stage
 - Establish a Payment Plan between the College and the Parents.
 - Collect additional information from parents to ascertain financial situation and any relevant circumstances of hardship; (for example details of income, expenditure, asset, liabilities)
 - Exclusion of student from extra-curricular activities (i.e. music tuition, overseas trips etc.)
 - iii. Part 3: Business Manager stage
 - Terminate enrolment (with approval of the Principal)
- d. Engage the services of a debt collection agency, including but not limited to once the enrolment of students has concluded at any point during the process, if collection attempts are not successful or

the parents are not engaging in the process with the College, the Principal, at sole discretion, may direct that a student's enrolment is terminated.

- e. This procedure will be followed as closely as possible, however the final decision on the appropriate course of action rests solely with the Principal who may take the following factors into consideration when assessing each circumstance:
- Lakeside College is a small community.
 - The impact on the College Community as a whole.
 - Length of time a family has been with the College.
 - The priority a family places on the payment of fees as demonstrated through a commitment to regular payments and communication to the College.

Fee Responsibility

- a. All parents are required to enter into an Enrolment Agreement with the College before their child can be enrolled. Each person who has signed the Enrolment Agreement is jointly and severally liable for the payment of school fees, as specified in the Enrolment Terms and Conditions. It is the practice of the College to require both parents sign the Enrolment Agreement, where possible.
- b. The College recognises that during their time at the College a family may go through a period of financial difficulty caused by a loss of income, sickness or family situation. The College will aim to work with these families to provide support where appropriate.

Parents are responsible for:

- paying their statement of fees in full by the end of the school year,
- negotiating a payment plan, where fees are paid in instalments, directly with the College Finance staff
- communicating to the College finance staff any changes in financial circumstances or contact details, or if fees cannot be paid in full by the above mentioned due date

Full-year fees, including any outstanding fees, should be finalised no later than November of the current year. If, due to changes in circumstances, families are unable to finalise their fees by this date, they are required to contact the College to discuss their situation and negotiate an arrangement to finalise their fees.

The school will regularly communicate with families regarding upcoming school fees and any fees outstanding. Financial counselling and other support will be offered to assist any family in need. The school will do its utmost to ensure that families do not find themselves in a situation of being severely behind in payment of fees.

From 2020, the whole year's school fees will be payable at the start of the school year. If payment in full is not possible, the College strongly encourages all families to enter into a payment plan by way of direct debit, bank transfer or similar, to ensure the whole year's fees are paid within the school year.

Debt management principles

- The College has committed to maintaining College fees at a manageable level in order to ensure that no family is denied an education at Lakeside College for financial reasons alone
- Every family at Lakeside College is required to contribute to the cost of education of their children, to

the best of their ability

- The College will endeavour at all times to ensure that families do not allow themselves to be in a position in which they cannot meet their financial obligations to the school.
- The Principal or Delegate, at their sole discretion, has the authority to reduce or waive payment of tuition fees on a case-by-case basis.
- Instances in which the Principal may consider waiving or reducing payment may include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:
 - bereavement of parent;
 - loss of job of parent;
 - significant change in financial ability of parents from the enrolment date;
- The College may institute fee assistance to support families that experience economic hardship. Support for families in the payment of their school fees should be considered in accordance with that policy.
- When a family is unable to pay their fee debt by the end of the school year, the fee debt will be considered to be in arrears and the College must be contacted to be advised how the arrears will be cleared.
- In order to support families with fee debt in arrears, or to stop family debt entering into arrears, the Business Manager and Principal may authorise such financial assistance, scholarships and realistic payment plans at their discretion to render assistance.
- In order to render such assistance to families in arrears, the College will be required to obtain sufficient information from families to gauge a better understanding of the financial position of those families
- The support given by a family to the College ethos and to College policies, and the behaviour of their children, will be taken into account when issuing assistance and making decisions on ceasing enrolment
- Where debt collection agencies are engaged, their actions in recouping the debt will be in keeping with the College values
- Repayment plans must be tenable. The plan must keep a family headed towards a zero debt before the family leaves the College.

Communication with the School Community

The College will ensure that:

- The fee policy is reviewed and updated on a regular basis
- Fee policies and related documentation are easily accessible
- The school's communication strategy includes regular reviews of strategies for the communication of its fee policy

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed triennially.