

Free uniform for 2017 Prep enrolments

ST JOSEPH'S Atherton Principal, Michael Lindsay knows that starting school can be an expensive time for parents. To help out, St Joseph's is offering a free uniform shirt and shorts to every new Preppie who is enrolled for next year, by the end of this term.

"It's just our way of saying welcome to the St Joseph's school community," Mr Lindsay said.

Even though Catholic schools charge fees in order to provide the quality education they are known for, Mr Lindsay said parents were often pleasantly surprised by just how affordable St Joseph's is.

"When coming to us from Kindergarten, parents often comment how the fees are, overall, cheaper than Kindergarten fees," he said.

"The consensus of prospective parents seems to be that if you can afford kindergarten, you can afford an education at St Joe's."

Mr Lindsay said the reason for this was because Catholic schools, including St Joe's are part of a wider diocesan system making it possible for schools to consolidate their resources and offer what they do at a more affordable price than a private or independent school.

"Parents often think of non-government schools as either private or independent.

"Catholic schools are neither.

"Independent schools are those such as Grammar, Brisbane Boys College or Trinity Anglican School and they can often charge quite high fees because they are on their own (hence, 'independent') and also because they might focus on a certain image they have for themselves.

"Catholic schools, including St Joe's, have a commitment to make a Catholic education accessible for whomever is genuinely seeking it for their child, regardless of their finances. Because of this, we and other Catholic schools across our diocese work hard at keeping costs down so as to make a quality Catholic education as affordable as possible."

For those who genuinely can't afford to pay the fees, generous discounts apply. Catholic Education provides a 70% rebate on tuition fees to eligible parents/carers with a means-tested Australian Government Health Card or Pensioner Concession Card.

Families without an eligible concession card who are also experiencing genuine financial hardship in paying fees can also apply for special consideration by speaking with their school Principal or Parish Priest who will treat their situation with understanding, sensitivity and confidentiality.

Executive Director of Catholic Education Services, Bill Dixon said that, by the same token, it was equally important that parents who could afford to pay, did so.

"It is the experience of our schools that families who are struggling financially are faithful in paying a contribution to their local school to whatever extent they can afford. It is the expectation that families with the capacity to contribute do so, so that as near to possible to full realisation of this income source can be achieved."

However, no child would be denied a Catholic education because of genuine financial hardship.

"It is important that families who want to send their child to a Catholic school are not excluded because they do not have the means to pay fees. It is our policy and practice to assist any family in this situation," Mr Dixon said.

"The shortfall between the basic costs of running a school and the amount funded by governments means a reasonable fee structure is essential for Catholic schools to operate and provide the high quality of education for which Catholic Education is known and parents rightly expect," he said.

Tuition fees for primary schools in the Cairns Diocese in 2017 will remain at 2016 levels. Secondary college fees will rise by 2.5% - a much smaller increase than previous years. Sibling discounts will continue to be offered to families with more than one child enrolled in one or more Catholic schools in the Cairns Diocese.

Mr Lindsay invites families to make the time to visit him at St Joe's for a personalised tour of the school so that they can make an informed decision about the best school for their child.

"If you have thought about a Catholic school and thought it might be too dear, or have never considered a Catholic education before, come in and get a feel for our school; you might just be pleasantly surprised!"



Catholic schools are more affordable than you might think. Preppies enrolled by the end of Term 3 will receive a free uniform shirt and short.

WOW! IF WE CAN AFFORD KINDY, WE CAN AFFORD A CATHOLIC SCHOOL!

You've given your child the best possible start in life by sending them to kindy; continue that by choosing a Catholic school for your child - it's worth it!

Make an appointment to visit St Joseph's to find out more, and enrol now.

BONUS SPECIAL OFFER: All Prep enrolments for 2017 accepted by the end of Term 3 will receive a FREE uniform shirt and shorts!

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www.stjoeys.qld.edu.au