



## Procedure

<b>Guideline/Procedure no:</b>	
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# School Fees - Concession Cards

## Reflection

Give some of your food to the hungry, and some of your clothing to the naked. Give all your surplus as alms, and do not let your eye begrudge your giving of alms." Tobit 4:16

## Purpose

The enrolment policy for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Cairns says no child will be denied a place in a Catholic school because of genuine financial hardship. This procedure outlines a process by which genuine financial hardship can be determined and appropriate arrangements made.

## Application

This will be used by all schools in Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns (CEDC) to assist them in determining and managing fee concessions.

## Procedure

### OPTIONS FOR OFFERING SCHOOL FEE DISCOUNTS

There are two options for determining eligibility for school tuition fees concessions:

1. When a parent or carer presents a current means tested Centrelink Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card with the appropriate codes (see Attachment 1 – Administration Guidelines, Attachment 2: Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount Form). This provides an automatic fee remission.
2. There will still be instances where the Principal and Parish Priest will exercise additional pastoral judgement and discernment when warranted. These instances will generally relate to families facing extraordinary circumstances. This might result in the approval of a remission in addition to the automatic health care card remission. Schools may wish to use Attachment 3 to determine the financial circumstances through which an additional remission might be applied.

## Practices

### PROMOTION OF THE AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL FEE DISCOUNTS

Schools and CES will widely promote the availability of tuition fee concessions, especially to families who might not otherwise consider a Catholic school because of financial hardship. The availability of means-tested discounts will be promoted through school and CES publications and websites, through media releases, and as

part of the enrolment process.

### **RESPECT FOR CONFIDENTIALITY AND FAMILY DIGNITY**

At all times school and CES staff will respect the dignity of those seeking discounted tuition fees. Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained at all times. It is important that staff know that the presentation of a valid concession care card confers an automatic fee remission – this is not negotiable. Families who receive a fee concession may offer to support and contribute to the school in other ways, such as volunteer activity. Wherever possible such requests should be viewed positively as it reflects both family pride and a commitment to their child's school.

### **DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF THE AUTOMATIC FEE REMISSION**

CES in consultation with schools, will determine the amount of the automatic fee concession each year as part of the annual budget development process for the following year. The amount of the concession will be widely promoted in school and enrolment information.

### **DETERMINING HOW REMISSIONS ARE FUNDED**

The annual fee review process will also determine how automatic remissions are funded by the school and system. This will be expressed as a percentage of the remission that will be met by the system and school.

### **Procedures for determining additional concessions or for concessions that are not Health Care Card based:**

The following procedures are suggested:

1. Families wishing to apply for a fee concession complete the 'Application for remission of school fees and levies form'(Attachment 3) and submit it to the school or parish office.
2. Information on the form is then used in an interview by the Principal/Parish Priest with the family to discuss a fee concession.
3. Alternatively the School/Parish might appoint an independent person of standing to undertake the interview and assessment. This might take place away from the school, e.g. at the Parish Centre.
4. The poverty line schedule may be used to assist in consistent treatment of all applicants. Updates can be accessed at [www.melbourneinstitute.com](http://www.melbourneinstitute.com) → publications → economic and social indicators → poverty lines. The application form provided by the parents provides the information to determine the family income's relationship to the poverty line.
5. This information will then be used to negotiate a concession, as appropriate, with the family concerned.
6. The family will then be asked to sign 'Remission acceptance form' which indicates the amount to be paid and the method of payment.

## **Enquires**

(Who can answer a question on the implementation of this procedure? This should be a title or section rather than a person ie. Responsibility attaches to a position not a person)

## **Related Directives, Polices and Procedures**

**Policy:** [Enrolment in Catholic Schools Policy](#)

**Policy:** [Privacy](#)

[Centrelink Confirmation eService Fact Sheet](#)

D365 processing instructions - [Fee Reductions - Concession Card Discounts FM 2.3](#)

Attachment 1: [Concession Card Tuition Fee Discount Scheme Administration Guidelines](#)

Attachment 2: [HCC Tuition Fee Discount Scheme Form](#)

[Attachment 3: Fees and Levies Hardship Concession Form](#)

Attachment 4: [Concession Card Information Sheet](#)

School fee remission acceptance form (*electronic forms available from schools*)