



Ave Maria College Handbook

Fee Policy

Formulated by: Finance Committee

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with CECV Policy 1.25, the Ave Maria College Enrolment Policy (2003), and the Ave Maria College Debtors Procedures (2000).

1. It is the policy of Ave Maria College to charge fees and levies to parents/guardians on an annual basis prior to the beginning of each school year.

2. Fees and Levies

- 2.1 Fees and levies for the following year will be set by the Board of Governance in November of each year, and will not be altered during the year in which they apply except for extraordinary circumstances.
- 2.2 As far as is practical, fee and levy structures will include all costs necessary to cover student tuition requirements for the year.
- 2.3 The Board of Governance is not in favour of the College asking parents to pay for additional compulsory subject costs, excursions, etc., which were not included in the original fee and levy structure.
- 2.4 Some levies may be invoiced separately during the year with the approval of the Principal. These may include certain non-compulsory excursions.
- 2.5 Where a student elects to take private instrumental music lessons through the College on a semester basis, the cost of these private lessons will be invoiced by the Finance Office. Parents will be required to pay these fees at the commencement of the semester in which the private lessons are to be taken. Families are required to fully meet all tuition fees and levies as a condition of enrolment in private instrumental music.
- 2.6 The Principal reserves the right to refuse the participation of a student in an extra-curricular activity where outstanding fees / levies exist for a prior school year.
- 2.7 Each signatory to the enrolment application form and/or subsequent re-enrolment forms will be both jointly and severally responsible for the timely payment of all fees and levies charged during the enrolment of their daughter at the College. The person/s responsible for the payment of fees and levies must sign the re-enrolment forms
- 2.8 Where the liability for the payment of fees and levies changes from one party to another party, either during the course of a student's enrolment or after a student leaves the College, each party will be required to submit a signed document which clearly indicates the change in liability for the payment of fees and levies, and the commencement date of this change in liability, to the Business Manager. If the College does not receive a mutually accepted agreement from the parties involved, the original signatories to the enrolment and subsequent re-enrolments will be jointly and severally liable for all debts incurred.
- 2.9 Where family circumstances change, any amount being held in the Family Loan Scheme, will be offset against the oldest debt at the time the College is notified. If there are no outstanding amounts, the amount held in the family loan scheme will continue to be held in trust until signed documents are received from the parties concerned agreeing upon the future treatment of this amount.
- 2.10 Where there are no current students at the College and fees and levies remain outstanding, the parties responsible for the payment of these amounts are required to enter into a direct debit agreement or a standing credit card authority with the College. Payments are to be made at least monthly, over a period of time as agreed with the Business Manager. This agreement will be formally approved by the Principal of the College. The College reserves the right to pursue the payment of the outstanding debt through alternative means if the debtors do not accept these arrangements.



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- 2.11 The College will charge an enrolment confirmation fee at the time that an offer of enrolment is made. The amount of this fee will be set annually by the Finance Committee. The amount of this enrolment fee will be credited against outstanding fees upon the commencement of the student/s at the College.
- 2.12 An annual re-enrolment fee will be included for each student with the fourth term account each year. The amount of this re-enrolment fee will be determined by the Finance Committee. This amount will be credited against the following year's fees upon the student/s recommencing their studies in the new year.

3. Students Commencing During Term

3.1 Students From Another Catholic School

- 3.1.1 Where a student transfers from another Catholic School mid-term and fees have been paid to the other school for that term, and there is no entitlement to a refund, Ave Maria College shall waive all tuition fees for that term.
- 3.1.2 The parents/guardians of such students will be liable to pay any specific subject levies, compulsory camps, elective excursions, etc., which occur during the remainder of the term.
- 3.1.3 All other fees and levies, etc. for subsequent terms will be charged as normal.
- 3.1.4 The Family Loan Scheme must be paid in full.

3.2 Students From Other Than Catholic Schools

- 3.2.1 All other students commencing at Ave Maria College mid-term will be required to pay full fees for that term where the term is half complete or less.
- 3.2.2 Where the term is more than half-complete, pro rata fees will be charged on a weekly basis. All levies for activities yet to be undertaken will be fully charged.

4. Absence for Prolonged Periods Of Time

- 4.1 Special arrangements will be determined on an individual basis, following consultation with the Principal.
- 4.2 Any outstanding fees or levies that exist at the time of commencing a period of prolonged absence are expected to be paid in full before the period of prolonged absence commences, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Business Manager and approved by the Principal.

5. Exchange Students

- 5.1.1 Ave Maria College encourages the Exchange Student Program. We welcome those overseas students who elect to visit our College and also those of our students who have the privilege to visit overseas schools under the Exchange Program.
- 5.1.2 The question of tuition fees will be considered on a case by case basis. They will, however, be expected to pay for all subject and library levies, specific subject levies, compulsory camp levies, together with any elective activities or camps.
- 5.1.3 Students from Ave Maria College embarking on an Exchange Studentship will not be charged any fees or levies or holding deposits during the duration of the Exchange.

Their place at Ave Maria College will be guaranteed on their return.

This is conditional on the period of Exchange not exceeding twelve months, and the student not remaining overseas in excess of the period of the Exchange.

If any outstanding fees or levies exist at the time of this period of Exchange, it is expected that these amounts will be paid in full prior to the student leaving the College, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Business Manager and approved by the Principal.



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6. Refund Of Fees To Exiting Students

The College bases its staffing and other related educational expenses on the student population as indicated by the confirmation of re-enrolment forms received in term four each year. In addition to the re-enrolments the College also relies on the confirmation of acceptance of new enrolments that it has received.

Where a student exits the College mid-term, or where an enrolment applicant has accepted a position and then withdraws prior to commencing at the College, it cannot be assumed that another student would be waiting to fill their position. The College is committed to the above expenditure and could not reasonably consider refunds in these cases.

For new enrolments where a position is accepted and at a later date this acceptance is revoked prior to commencing at the College, the amount paid in relation to the enrolment confirmation fee and the amount paid to the family loan scheme shall be forfeited to the College.

For existing students a minimum of one full term's notice in writing, to advise the College the student is exiting, is required. In the absence of such notice, one quarter of a full year's fees and levies will be required to be paid in lieu of notice.

There will be no refund for private instrumental music lessons.

6.1 Students Going to Another Catholic School

6.1.1 Ave Maria College would expect a reciprocal arrangement with other Catholic schools as outlined in point 3.1.1, therefore no proportion of the current term's fees and levies would be reimbursed.

6.2 Students Going to Other Than Another Catholic School

6.2.1 No proportion of the current term's fees and levies would be reimbursed.

6.3 No refund for fees or levies would be given to either of the above under normal circumstances.

6.4 No refund will be given for any compulsory camps or excursions already undertaken by the student.

6.5 These students would be eligible for a complete refund of levies relating to those activities which have not yet been undertaken, as well as full reimbursement of all subsequent terms' fees and levies (if paid in advance).

6.6 The College reserves the right to transfer any Family Loan Scheme monies held by it to offset any outstanding fees and levies.

6.7 Parents\Guardians may appeal to the Principal in writing should they believe that their circumstances are exceptional.

7. Collection Guidelines

The College is partially funded by the Federal and State Governments. Family fee collection covers the balance.

Parents\Guardians will acknowledge their obligation to honour their fee and levy payments when they sign the enrolment/re-enrolment form. Normal terms of payment are annually in advance or quarterly in advance. The College also offers payment schemes on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

The full amount of the year's fees and levies e.g. excursions, camps etc., will be shown on the initial account.



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The Business Manager will monitor the payment of fees and levies and make contact with families when they fail to meet their obligations. The Finance Committee will provide support and guidelines for the commission of this task.

Payments made against accounts in arrears will be applied:

- (i) against the oldest balance until eliminated
and
- (ii) the current balance
or
- (iii) against the nominated account.

Legal processes may be used to recover money owing if all other collection procedures fail. [The College reserves the right to recover legal costs incurred in the course of recovering outstanding debts.]

A discount of 15% applies for the second child concurrently enrolled at the College. A discount of 25% applies for any additional sisters concurrently enrolled in the College. Fee discounts only apply to Tuition Fees.

A discount is offered to families who pay in full the total amount invoiced for fees and levies by the conclusion of the first full week of the school year. The rate of discount applicable will be determined by the Finance Committee and communicated with families at the time of the annual accounts being distributed.

A discount of an amount as determined by the Finance Committee will be given in regard to each student for whom the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is received by a parent/guardian in first semester of each year.

7.1 Standard Collection

The fee collection process is as follows:

- In December of each year, the College will forward to families an invoice/statement for the following year. The invoice/statement includes a section where families are asked to indicate their preferred method of payment. The accompanying letter indicates that alternative arrangements can be made with the Business Manager.
- Families with an outstanding balance will be issued a statement on a quarterly basis, showing the outstanding balance as at that point of time. A message reminding families to contact the College if there are difficulties meeting fee and levy payments will be included with this statement.
- If payment is not received, letters will be sent to the families requesting payment or inviting them to attend a meeting with the Business Manager. These reminders are followed up by telephone calls from the Finance Office.
- In the absence of a response the matter will be forwarded to a collection agency.

7.2 Special Circumstances

Discounts or remissions of fees may be considered:

- 7.2.1 Only after a formal written application/statutory declaration has been received from the Parent/Guardian using the College's standard application form. Application forms are available upon request from the Finance Office. Supporting documentation is to be included with the application.
- 7.2.2 Any application received without a completed and executed statutory declaration will be rejected. The statutory declaration must be signed by all parties to the account.



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- 7.2.3 Upon referral to data available regarding past payment practices, discounts received and support the family may have given the school by other means, e.g. Canteen, Parents and Friends Association, Open Day, other College functions and events.
- 7.2.4 On the understanding that fee arrangements will be negotiated annually and the relative financial situation of the family updated.
- 7.2.5 After verification of amounts received for Austudy, Maintenance Allowance, Family Allowance or other sources.
- 7.2.6 The Principal and the Business Manager will meet to consider each application on its own merits.
- 7.2.7 The Business Manager will write to the families advising them of the outcome of their application.
- 7.2.8 The College will monitor each family who receives Family Assistance in order to ensure that agreed payment schemes are adhered to.
- 7.2.9 Family Assistance is made available relative to College Fees, Information Technology Levy and Capital Levy. It is not available for payment of School Camps and Excursions, Subject Levies, Books, Stationery or Uniforms.
- 7.2.10 Where the College becomes aware that information supplied on the statutory declaration is false, the matter will be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration as to the repercussions. Where the Finance Committee is satisfied that a fraudulent act has taken place, the matter may be refer to the Victoria Police for action.
- 7.3 **The Role of the Parish Priests:**
Parish Priests are invited to refer families whom they believe would qualify for fees assistance. Where the Parish Priest perceives there may be exceptional circumstances that might require a variation to the standard procedures, the Parish Priest will refer the matter to the Principal who will personally interview the family. The Principal will make the ultimate decision as to the basis upon which the family will be accepted and will convey this to the family in writing, with a copy to the Parish Priest;
8. A copy of this policy, with a cover letter, will be forwarded to Parish Priests and Principals of our feeder schools.

RATIFIED: February 2001, revised August 2004, revised May 2006

This policy will be formally reviewed as required.