



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools



25th November 2024

CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS and SCHOOL TUITION FEES and LEVIES 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians and Carers,

I am writing in regard to:

- Child Safety Standards
- School Tuition Fees for 2025
- Payment methods

CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

As part of the Child Safety Standards Stella Maris Catholic Primary School continues to be committed to providing a respectful learning environment that is safe, positive and supportive for all students, staff, parents and other members of the school community.

We acknowledge and value that Parents, Guardians and Carers are crucial contributors in the life of our school and play a key role in the education of their children. As such, it is imperative that they act, at all times, in the best interest of all students, their families, staff members and the broader school community.

It is the intention of Stella Maris Catholic Primary School to provide all parents with clear guidelines regarding the conduct expected of them whilst on the school premises, communicating with staff, engaging in school related activities, attending school events or in any other way representing the school. Parents are expected to uphold the school's core values and expectations at all times.

- If you would like to be a volunteer at Stella Maris you must **read, sign and return** the Child Safety Code of Conduct with your Working With Children Check.
- If you haven't got a Working With Children Check please apply through this website:
<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>

OVERVIEW of SCHOOL TUITION FEES and LEVIES 2025

The educational environment of Stella Maris continues to change and grow to meet our enrolment numbers and needs. In 2025 we will have approximately 750 students. We will continue to offer a fantastic, fast developing school environment, both inside and out.

It was with a great sense of satisfaction that I was able to negotiate the purchase of the empty land, formally owned by the Melbourne Archdiocese, which we were using on a short term basis. You may have heard your child refer to it as, "the wild west". It is now a permanent part of the schools resources. The ownership of the land offers huge benefits to us including:

- Not having to split pick up/drop off times, recess and lunchtime. This means we have safe and appropriate spaces for the 750 students to play in and move through at all times of the day.
- It puts the school in a stronger financial position avoiding the additional costs of extra yard duties, extra staffing during extra curriculum days and extra staffing during planning time on tuesdays, wednesdays and thursdays.
 - Meaning we do not have to run dual timetables during the school day and can maintain existing staff levels, a consistent timetable and a consistent culture across the whole community.
- Having a space to run and manage our large community events such as Fun Day, Colour Runs and Family events.
- Having a space to move staff cars off the street during drop off/pick up times and parents cars during the many special events we run each year.

The school has borrowed approximately 50% of the cost of the purchase price. I paid the other half with cash reserves built up over a number of years. Servicing this new loan will mean our capital fee increases.

Our tuition fees will also increase this year. The increase in part is due to instructions to principals as part of an overall increase expected by The Melbourne Archdiocese. I have included components of their letter in the next few paragraphs.

Any decision to adjust tuition fees is never made lightly, nor without careful and thorough consideration of our students' needs and our school's capacity to provide an education experience that supports every student to flourish. We are also cognisant of the financial pressures that many families have experienced this year.

Whilst I endeavor to keep our increases at a minimum each year Stella Maris, too, is facing increasing costs in multiple areas of school operations, including WorkCover premiums, Child Safety compliance, risk management, teacher resources and professional learning, and higher central system costs.

Tuition fees at Stella Maris, along with all Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese, are influenced by the Commonwealth Department of Education's calculation of our community's ability to financially contribute to the operating costs of our school, known as the Capacity to Contribute, or CTC, which is reviewed annually.

School funding is complex, so I have included with this letter a simple school funding "explainer" which I hope will support your understanding of how the government funds Catholic (and other non-government) schools and how tuition fees support the school.

To ensure that we can continue to deliver a personalised, high-quality education that is responsive to the diverse interests and academic, social and emotional needs of your children, it is necessary to adjust our tuition fees in 2025.

My goal at all times is to provide accessible, affordable Catholic Education to our families balancing the financial capacity of our families with the costs involved in education provision. With this in mind, I have attempted to keep the increases to the minimal amount possible to cover increased costs across all areas.

DETAILS of SCHOOL FEES 2025

The fees cover both tuition fees and levies.

- A **Family Fee of \$1730**. This is a family fee, it is not charged per individual child.
- The **Capital Fee is \$450**. This is a family fee, it is not charged per individual child.
- The **Curriculum Levy** is an individual Levy (charged to each student) and covers stationery, books, library, technology expenses, ICT program licences, art materials, music and PE materials and other classroom incidentals. It also includes camp, excursion or incursion costs for 2025.

The Individual Student Curriculum Levy is a tiered system	Student Levy	Estimated Camp Cost	Total
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Foundation to Year 2	\$560.00		\$560.00
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Year 3 or Year 4	\$575.00		\$575.00
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Year 5	\$595.00	\$390	\$985.00
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Year 6	\$625.00	\$390	\$1015.00

When parents accept enrolment at Stella Maris, they agree to their child being involved in the whole school curriculum and related programs. Every child is charged for attendance at their Year Level Camp Program as part of their annual Fees & Levies. Should a parent decide to withdraw their child from attendance, please note that NO REFUND will be offered as the individual cost for Camp is based on attendance of all students in accordance with the Enrolment Acceptance Agreement. At this point in time, having reviewed the feasibility of the year three and four camp, I am planning for a one day program to replace the camp experience. Year five and six students will continue to go on camp. I will write to you further about this decision.

In the 2022 school year a Concessional Fee Policy was introduced to Catholic Primary Schools, this gives eligible families the opportunity to apply for a review of their fees based on the below criteria:

Eligibility for Concessional School Fees:

1. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage
2. Holding a HCC and eligible for CSEF
3. Experiencing severe financial hardship
4. Holding a DVA Gold Card
5. Identified as refugees and holding an ImmiCard
6. HSS who attend a MACS primary school on a part time basis, who meet any of the criteria detailed

If you believe you are eligible to apply for the concessional fees based on the above criteria, please contact our office for additional information and to discuss the application process.

If your application is approved and you are confirmed eligible, below is an outline of the student fees, excluding camp:

1. 1 child: \$15 per child per week, direct debit (\$780 per annum or \$195 per term)
2. 2 children: \$23 for the family per week, direct debit (\$1,196 per annum, or \$299 per term)
3. 3+ children: \$30 for the family per week, direct debit (\$1,560 per annum, or \$390 per term)

PAYMENT METHODS

There are several ways to pay your school fees and levies:

- A one off payment of your fees and levies in full
- Three equal payments - terms one, two and three
- By monthly direct debit (preferred option)
- Bank Transfer/Direct Deposit
- EFTPOS at school
- By a negotiated payment plan

Please contact Myself, Mrs Rose Mary Pascal or Kelly Hetherton rpascal@stellamaris.catholic.edu.au or on 0473 486 005 at the School Office if you have any questions or to organise these arrangements with you.

Any family that encounters financial difficulty in meeting payments are asked to discuss this matter with Rose, Kelly or myself. Please don't hesitate to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Harrison
PRINCIPAL

Stella Maris Catholic Primary School

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