

1 December 2023

## CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS and SCHOOL FEES 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians and Carers,

I am writing in regard to:

- Child Safety Standards,
- Overview of school fees
- Details of school fees for 2024.
- 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 Volunteers Code of Conduct & Volunteer Duty Statement 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](https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

### OVERVIEW of SCHOOL FEES

The educational environment of Stella Maris continues to change and grow to meet our enrolment numbers and needs. In 2024 we will have approximately 750 students. We will continue to offer a fantastic, constantly developing school environment, both inside and out. The senior community building project has been completed and all students will learn in the same community space. The funding of the project has been a combination of a school loan and grants through the Commonwealth Government. In addition, I have acquired a small slither of land, which is a portion of the original site plan when Stella Maris was first opened.

I have continued to target our school grounds with the help of funds raised by our P&F. The 'Grounds' Master Plan is nearing completion, creating a natural, engaging and stimulating space. The P&F have once again made a significant contribution. We have a beautiful area outside our new 'Community Hub' beside the new Senior Community area. In 2024 we are building new playground options, including our Arts precinct, a sensory barn, geologist kingdom and a reimagined village.

In setting the fees and charges for next year, the Holy Trinity Parish principals, as part of the Education Advisory Board, and our business managers, review running and staffing costs as well as other factors that go into our complicated funding formula. I want to once again clarify some of the details around the funding of our school.

- Our fees and fundraising endeavour to cover a shortfall in school funding compared to Government schools.
- Each Catholic school is given a Socio-Economic Scale score (SES) rating upon which each child, and subsequently each school is funded.
- We have a resulting shortfall compared to Government schools of approximately 17%. As a result, our fees structure is expected to make up the shortfall.
- In our case at present, it does not; I operate the school on approximately a 90 to 93% equivalent.
- Our total fees are still \$300 less than like SES schools.
- Your fees and fundraising continue to be essential components in the running of our school.

In order for the school to sustain its current standards and offer high educational opportunities for your children, payment of your school fees is essential.

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.

#### DETAILS of SCHOOL FEES 2024

My goal at all times is to provide accessible, affordable Catholic Education to our families at Stella Maris, balancing the financial capacity of our families with the costs involved in education provision. With this in mind, whilst school fees are increasing in parts for 2023, I have attempted to keep the increases to the minimal amount possible to cover increased costs across all areas. Our overall increase will be approximately 7%.

The fees cover both tuition fees and levies.

- The **Family Fee of \$1600.**
- The **Capital Fund is \$300.**
- 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 2024.

The Individual Student <b>Curriculum Levy</b> is a tiered system	Student Levy	Estimated Camp Cost	Total
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Foundation to Year 2	\$540.00		\$540.00
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Year 3 or Year 4	\$555.00	\$220	\$775.00
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Year 5	\$575.00	\$340	\$915.00
Individual Student Curriculum Levy for Year 6	\$605.00	\$340	\$945.00

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. An Application will be sent with your Annual Fees Statement in February 2024.

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)
- By negotiated payment plan

Please contact Mrs Rose Pascal at the School Office to organise these arrangements with you.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Stephen Harrison**  
**PRINCIPAL**