



Thomas More College

2018 Fee Policy and Procedures

## **FEE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **RATIONALE**

Thomas More College is a Catholic Secondary School serving the educational needs of boys and girls from Year 8 to Year 12. In order to meet its requirements the College charges fees and the following policy provides the guidelines for the setting, collection and remission of these fees.

As with all Catholic Schools, Thomas More College receives Australian and State Government funding. However, the College is dependent upon income from tuition and associated fees for the provision of educational facilities and resources, payment of day to day operational works and capital works, in order to provide a contemporary education for our students.

Thomas More College also must adhere to the Education Act 1972 which requires all children of compulsory school age be enrolled at school. The Act states “A condition of that enrolment is that a student is required to fully participate in the education program arranged and approved by the enrolling school. Such participation is to include engagement and attendance as required by the program”.

### **AIM**

Thomas More College will set fees at a level to maintain quality education and facilities for the students whilst having consideration for the financial capacity of the community we serve.

The College Board will ensure that the financial responsibilities of all families are met as to their agreed obligations by having a systematic and identifiable procedure for the imposition and collection of fees thus ensuring the financial well-being of the College.

It is the responsibility of the College Board to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to enable the collection of tuition and associated fees. Parents/guardians make a commitment to pay tuition and associated fees when they sign the Enrolment form, prior to their child commencing at Thomas More College.

The Finance Subcommittee of the College Board has oversight of the collection of fees and will review outstanding fees on an ongoing basis. This Subcommittee reports to the Board the status of fee collection. Please note that all family details remain confidential at all times.

### **PREAMBLE**

Thomas More College operates within the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) guidelines for the maintenance of private income. This document has been prepared in reference to the SACCS Annual Guidelines which is a guide to School Boards in their deliberations on school fee structures.

It is the policy of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools that no child be denied a Catholic Education because of a parent’s demonstrated inability to pay fees subject to the school’s enrolment policy and that of SACCS.

We rely on ALL families contributing fairly towards the fees associated with the education of their children.

Families who have their income verified and approve via the S.A. Government School Card Scheme will receive a discount on their Tuition Fees. All families are expected to make fee contribution.

Tuition and associated fees and charges are set in light of the school's Five Year Plan which has been prepared in consultation with the Finance Team of the Catholic Education South Australia (CESA). The level of the College's Socioeconomic Status Score and the Annual Guidelines set by the CESA guide decisions about fees and charges.

## **FEE STRUCTURE**

Thomas More College will set the following annual fees each year per student:

- ❖ Tuition Fee
- ❖ Curriculum Levy

The amounts to be charged will be published in the Fee & Levy schedule for each school year.

Tuition Fee: Tuition fees are payable to support the operational costs of the College not met by the Commonwealth and State Government funding received by the school.

Curriculum Levy: This levy covers numerous items and they are detailed below:

1. The levy covers the day to day costs and general consumables used in teaching the curriculum, plus a College diary per student. It also assists in covering the cost of the IT device provided via the 1:1 Program and subject text books/ebooks the College purchases and maintains each year.
2. Each year level has a number of compulsory year level activities which could be a camp, retreat, seminar days, visiting performers, excursions and other activities which are compulsory events for each student. The cost of these activities is included in the Curriculum Levy. This levy does not cover all activities the students are required to be a part of or attend. This levy is averaged out to make it more affordable. This levy is non-refundable if a student does not attend an activity, as all activities are compulsory and calculated and booked based on all students attending.
3. Thomas More College is committed to bringing the latest technology to the College site, so this levy includes upgrading and maintaining the infrastructure which maintains the College network and specialist computer facilities, hardware and software. It also goes towards student internet access and printing costs.

Please note the College Board has the right to introduce new charges and notification of any charges will be in the Thomas More College Newsletter.

Curriculum based camps, excursions and activities are vital parts of the curriculum and are compulsory. Significant camps, excursions and activities are discussed with all parties during the subject selection process so families are aware of future charges. Charges and frequency are kept to a minimum where possible and are based on all students attending. Parents are required to ensure these charges are paid prior to the camp/excursion being held. Buses, venues and food are booked to cater for the maximum number and therefore the College will be charged even if students do not attend.

The Teacher co-ordinating the activity will inform you via a letter or the student's diary of the activity and the cost involved. An invoice may be sent home if the activity is of significant cost. The activity must be paid in full before a student attends. An activity may involve purchasing a train ticket from the College Finance Office or on the train, and this is a cost to be covered by families.

## **BUILDING FUND DONATION**

Building Fund Donation: The facilities at Thomas More College are in a large part due to the support of past and present families. An annual Building Fund donation is requested by each family. The amount of the donation will be determined each year by the College Board and will appear in three instalments on the statements that are sent to families in terms 1, 2 and 3. This donation will help support new building projects, extensions of new buildings and the maintenance of existing buildings. The donation is fully TAX DEDUCTIBLE. A direct debit can also be set up on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis to make the instalments more affordable.

## **ENROLMENT DEPOSIT**

An Enrolment Deposit is required to be paid at the time of accepting an offer of enrolment. This deposit is non-refundable and will be deducted from the Tuition Fees in the year the student begins at Thomas More College.

## **SCHEDULE OF FEES**

The Finance Subcommittee will oversee all matters relating to the setting of fees, remissions and collections and make recommendation to the College Board to consider. The Finance Subcommittee will consist of the Principal, Business Manager, Treasurer and other nominated members of the College Board.

Once the Finance Subcommittee has deliberated the College financial commitments of the school it will recommend a fee structure to the College Board for them to discuss and approve. Once approval has been granted the College Board will notify parents/guardians before the end of the school year.

On application for enrolment, parents/guardians will be provided with the schedule of fees and the College's Fee Policy and Procedure. Prospective parents/guardians will also be informed that on enrolment of their child, they accept the responsibility for the payment of tuition fees and other costs associated with the education of their children. Parents/guardians make a commitment to pay College fees when they sign the Application for Enrolment Form for our College.

Each year each family will be asked to sign a Payment Agreement. This may take the form of an on-line acknowledgement where applicable.

If payments are not received from parents/guardians towards the tuition and associated fees charged for their enrolled child/children, the College has been unsuccessful in contacting the enrolling parents/guardians on several occasions, and no contact is made with the College to make other arrangements, the family account will be referred to a debt collection agency.

## **FAMILY DISCOUNTS**

A family discount is available to families with two or more children attending the College, and who have the same enrolling parents/guardians. The discounts will be applied against the tuition fee charged, on the following basis:

- ❖ Two children – 20% discount applied against the second child’s tuition fees.
- ❖ Three children – 35% discount applied against the third child’s tuition fees.
- ❖ Four or more children – 90% discount applied against the fourth child’s and any subsequent children’s tuition fees.

## **SIBLING DISCOUNTS**

A 3% Sibling Discount is available for non-school card families who have a child/children attending a Catholic Primary School. The discount is applied against the enrolled student’s tuition fees. To receive the Sibling discount a payment agreement must be completed in full and approved by the College.

## **SCHOOL CARD**

The State Government offers assistance for families via the School Card Assistance Scheme. Families on low incomes are encouraged to apply for government assistance under the School Card Scheme. It is important that parents/guardians work with the school to complete the necessary documentation as there are administrative cut-off dates (determined by the Department of Education and Children Services) that apply each term, and need to be complied with in order to receive funds for each eligible child.

Families who have their income verified and approved via the S.A. Government School Card Scheme will receive discounts of up to 50% on tuition fees. The discounts will be tiered based on family income levels in the following manner (with all income levels based on single child families, and adjusted accordingly based on the South Australian Government’s annual guidelines):

Income below \$38,000	50% Discount
Income between \$38,001 & \$43,000	40% Discount
Income between \$43,001 & \$48,000	30% Discount
Income between \$48,001 & \$53,000	20% Discount
Income between \$53,001 & \$58,000	10% Discount

Please note that the highest level of discount applies. For example, if eligible for a 30% discount, the 20% Family Discount for the second child does not apply.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Where families are experiencing financial or personal hardship, families are encouraged to:

1. Apply to the College Finance Officer to pay by instalments if this payment option is suitable. Payment by instalment can include direct debit, BPAY or Centrelink deductions and payment schedules can be arranged; or

2. Apply to the College Finance Officer for an extension of time if this will assist in paying the tuition and associated fees; or
3. Apply to the Business Manager in writing for assistance for a warranted reduction in tuition fees. Information in relation to income and other commitments will be required; or
4. Make an appointment and meet with the Business Manager if they have difficulty in paying fees so that the necessary steps for fee reduction application can be discussed. Information in relation to income and other commitments will be required

Any applications for tuition fee and levy assistance are treated as confidential.

Any reduction in tuition fees or levies will be considered in terms of the financial needs of the family and of the College Board's responsibility to families who are making the effort to pay regular fees and levies.

Please note that any families who are granted a reduction of tuition fees, an extension of time or an instalment plan, are for the current year only, after which time they would need to annually request for assistance, if their financial circumstances have not improved.

Likewise, it will be seen as the family's responsibility to make good all or part of any reductions if their financial position improves markedly.

Non-payment of reduced tuition fees is treated as an overdue account.

## **PAYMENT OF FEES**

Thomas More College supports the concept of equitable financial responsibility on all members of its community and part payments of fees by the due date or by way of regular payments is part of the process.

To achieve this goal, the College asks for families to commit to a payment plan and complete a Payment Agreement each year.

The College encourages regular communication between all parties in relation to the payment of fees.

Accounts can be paid by cash, EFTPOS, cheque, BPAY, direct debit, direct deposit or Centrepay deductions (Centrelink).

The current authority forms for direct debit and regular payments from a savings, cheque or credit card account and Centrepay deductions can be obtained from the Finance Office or downloaded from the College Website. Families are encouraged to make regular payment of accounts through direct debits to assist them in meeting their commitments and can be paid weekly, fortnightly, monthly and quarterly. Direct debits can be ongoing with your authority.

## **FEE COLLECTION TIMELINES**

### **Curriculum Levy**

A published amount of the Curriculum Levy will be invoiced during the month of November, prior to the new school year, and is required to be paid in full by the **end of the first week, Term 1**.

### **Tuition Fees and Curriculum Levy (second invoice) - invoices & statements of account**

The fees, levies and charges will be invoiced at the beginning of each year. Each family will receive a full statement in January detailing all fees and levies outstanding. Tuition Fees are required to be paid in line with the completed Payment Agreement or in three equal instalments and the account must be paid in full by Term 3, Week 6.

**By Week 2 of Terms 2 & 3** – statement of amounts due will be issued as a reminder.

#### **Payment timelines**

- **Week 1 of Term 1** – A published amount of the Curriculum Levy will be due for payment. Where payments are not received by the end of week 1 of term 1, the account will attract a **late fee** and this will appear on the family statement. An overdue letter will be issued to families that have attracted a late fee. Families should contact the College if there are any difficulties.

- **Week 6 of Terms 1, 2, & 3** – one third of the annual Tuition Fee and Curriculum Levy (second invoice) should have been paid as per the payment agreement and College policy.

- **Week 7 of Terms 1, 2, & 3** – Where payments are not received by the end of Week 6 in each term or as per the Payment Agreement and College policy, the account will attract a **late fee** and this will appear on the family statement. An overdue letter will be issued to families that have attracted a late fee. Families should contact the College if there are any difficulties.

- **Week 9 of Terms 1, 2, & 3** – Where no payment has been made, or contact has not been made with the College and an alternative arrangement established, the College will refer the account to a debt collection agency.

#### **DEBT COLLECTION AGENCY**

If payments are not received from parents/guardians towards the tuition and associated fees charged for their enrolled child/children, the College has been unsuccessful in contacting the enrolling parents/guardians on several occasions, and no contact is made with the College to make other arrangements, the family account will be referred to a debt collection agency, who may if directed

- refer to solicitors.

- take Court action to recover the fees, where deemed appropriate.

**Parents are advised that any costs incurred in the use of the debt collection agency will be billed to their account.**

Once the collection agency has been engaged, parents are required to work through the agency for settlement of their account.

#### **REFUND**

Upon a student leaving Thomas More College, providing the College has received a **term's notice**, and a completed clearance form, the following refund procedure will apply:

- ❖ **If a student leaves at any time during term 1**, 50% of the total Curriculum Levy will be refunded and 75% of the Tuition Fee will be refunded. If any discounts have been provided they will be reversed 100%, including Board remission.
- ❖ **If a student leaves the College anytime during term 2**, 50% of the Curriculum Levy will be refunded and 50% of the Tuition Fee will be refunded. 50% of any discount provided will be reversed, including Board remission.
- ❖ **If a student leaves anytime during term 3**, the Curriculum Levy will not be refunded. 25% of the Tuition Fee will be refunded. 25% of any discount provided will be reversed, including Board remission.
- ❖ **If a student leaves during Term 4**, no refund will be provided.
- ❖ The ownership of the IT Device and any other resources given to the Student while they're attending Thomas More College remain the property of the College. If these resources are not returned as per College policy you will be charged the full replacement cost of the item.

If no notice is provided on a student leaving Thomas More College, one term will be payable in lieu of notice.

If a new enrolment of a child/children is due to begin, and the child/children doesn't begin their enrolment at Thomas More College, one term will be payable.

If a student leaves the College, and their account is in credit, and no other siblings are attending the College or will attend the College, the College will issue them with a letter asking them how they would like to receive the refund or whether they would like to donate the amount owing to them to the College Building Fund.

## **STUDENTS BEGINNING AT THOMAS MORE COLLEGE DURING THE YEAR**

If a student begins at Thomas More College during the school year, families will be charged the following tuition and associated fees:

- ❖ **If a student begins at the College during Term 1**, 100% of all relevant Fees, Levies and Charges will be charged. Family, school card or sibling discounts will be applied, if relevant, based on the fees charged.
- ❖ **If a student begins at the College during Term 2**, 75% of the Tuition Fee and Curriculum Levy will be charged. Family, school card or sibling discounts will be applied, if relevant, based on the fees charged.
- ❖ **If a student begins at the College during Term 3**, 50% of the Tuition Fee and Curriculum Levy will be charged. Family, school card and sibling discounts will be pro-rated in accordance with the Tuition and Curriculum fees.
- ❖ **If a student begins at the College during Term 4**, 25% of the Tuition Fee and Curriculum Levy will be charged. Family, school card and sibling discounts will be pro-rated in accordance with the Tuition and Curriculum fees.

**The College Board has the right to make any changes and/or additions to this policy and if any changes and/or additions are made the changes will be published in the Thomas More College More News and on the College website.**

**This Policy was accepted by the Thomas More College Board in November 2017 to take action from 1 January 2018.**