



St Patrick's College
LAUNCESTON

21 May 2020

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From the Office of the Principal

Dear Parent/Guardian,

RE: School Fees

I communicated with our families in March regarding the assistance we could offer to all those who had been impacted by COVID-19. At that time the school offered support for those parents and guardians that had lost employment or business income and asked them to come forward as we were eager to help them through this stressful time. If you have not needed to seek assistance until now, but have suffered a loss of income, it is not too late to approach the school.

As the Tasmanian Government starts to ease restrictions and as our students return to school in the next few weeks, I wanted to assure you that we will continue to support you through these difficult financial circumstances. While financial support has been offered to families suffering a loss of income, as a Catholic system of schools we have decided not to rebate fees for our other families and I would like to explain the reasoning to you in order for you to understand this decision.

Catholic schools in this State have the lowest fee base of any non-Government school system across Australia. We consciously and deliberately regulate fees to ensure that opportunities are provided for the financially less fortunate families within our community to enrol their child at a Catholic school. No student will be refused enrolment, be excluded, or be disadvantaged because of an inability on the part of the family to pay fees.

Because fees are very modest there is little room in school budgets to accommodate a reduction in fee income by providing a general rebate. Government Grant income accounts for 80% of the income to schools, on average, and so school fees play a very significant part in being able to operate such an effective system of schools. Fee remissions due to financial hardship accounted for over \$6 million across our 38 Catholic schools in 2019. We expect that this amount will increase significantly during this pandemic and that fee support will continue at a much higher rate throughout the remainder of this year.

We value our staff and we are proud of what they have been able to achieve in such a short period of time in the delivery of Learning@Home. We are thankful that no staff members have had their employment altered during this crisis and as employment costs are between 70% and 80% of school budgets, this expense item cannot be reduced.

In addition, while some costs in schools have decreased (e.g. professional development for teachers and travel costs) many others have increased significantly. Schools have been required to quickly adapt to the Learning@Home platform and this has necessitated support for teachers and the provision of adequate IT systems to enable this work. The need to ensure the safety of our students has meant that the cleaning requirements have increased considerably and will continue to be high for the remainder of the year.



I understand that there have been additional costs for you in support of your child's learning during the past two months and we are appreciative of this contribution. Please be assured that our staff are continuing to support your family with your child's education. We are incurring significant expenses to manage Coronavirus related issues and I am also anticipating a significant reduction in our budgeted fee income as a result of the additional support we will be providing to families at this time.

Please be assured that we are committed to working with all of our families through this very complex time.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Daley', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Mr Tony Daley
Principal

