

POLICY: School Fees

Aquinas College is the oldest co-educational Catholic College on the Gold Coast. With a renewed Vision and Mission and core values of faith, courage, compassion and belonging, Aquinas College offers a learning context that values the unique learning journey of each student. We offer an extensive range of academic, cultural and sporting opportunities for students.

The following information should be considered alongside the Aquinas College Fee Schedule, which is updated yearly with specifics relating to fees, levies and charges.

Fees and Levies collected are used for the following purposes, aligned to the Vision and Mission of Aquinas College:

- Provide teaching, administrative and classroom support and facilities staff
- Provide essential resources, materials, facilities and equipment
- Providing activities such as excursions, sporting programs and camps
- Maintain buildings, grounds and other facilities
- Provide new buildings and grounds enhancements and support of the College building debt

The Aquinas College Parents and Friends Association also collects a levy through the College fees to support the initiatives of the parents and community within the College.

For those families experiencing genuine financial hardship and inability to pay fees, we are committed to providing support to ensure that a student enrolment is not compromised. Please contact the Finance Department for further information regarding the concession application process. It is a condition of enrolment that families work with the College to manage payment of school fees where there are difficulties with payments.

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School Fee and Levies - Process and Expectations

- School fees and levies are charged on a term-by-term basis during the first two weeks of each Term (4 terms per year).
- Fees are due to be paid within 14 days of the issue of the Statement of Fees and Levies. The due date will be noted on the statement.
- Where a parent/guardian believes financial circumstances have arisen that will prevent or delay the payment of the school fee account, early communication with the College is essential. A variety of options are available:
 - **Payment Extension**
A request for an extension can be made by contacting the Finance Office
 - **Payment Plans**
Payment of the school fee and levy account by regular instalments. All payment plans must ensure that the account is cleared by the last day of the school year or as negotiated with the Finance Officer or Business Manager.
 - **Fee Concessions**
In cases of financial hardship an application may be made for a fee concession.

Fee Concessions

A compassionate and just approach under the mission and values of Brisbane Catholic Education and Aquinas College is used when reviewing applications. The process of calculating concession eligibility is individual to each family's circumstances and is applied using Brisbane Catholic Education's concessions template, which formulates a decision based upon a household's total disposable income, less basic housing costs. The same approach is adopted by all Brisbane Catholic Education Colleges for assessing eligibility.

- Concession Applications are accepted at the commencement of each year or at any point initiated by the family.
- Concession application forms are available at the Finance Office, on the Aquinas College website and on the Parent Portal.
- Concession applications are accepted and processed only when all supporting documentation is received by the College.
- Concessions are issued for a maximum period of 12 months within a calendar year.
- Concessions will be applied from the term applications are received and continue for the rest of the school year.
- Concessions do not transfer from primary schools to colleges, or between schools.
- All matters are dealt with on a confidential basis.



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Students participating in optional activities requiring a financial commitment:

It is a requirement that monies paid to Aquinas College for whatever purpose will be allocated with priority as follows:

1. Tuition Fees
2. School levies
3. Extracurricular activities (e.g., Confraternity, QISSN, Non compulsory travels).

School fees and levies are to be paid in full before students may attend any optional excursions or activities that require a financial commitment. Those paying fees and levies on a formal payment plan, with a solid history of financial commitment to the College, may be considered, following a conversation with the Finance Office.

Whilst some activities may be linked to curriculum, they are deemed to be non-compulsory and as such, inclusion in these activities is only permitted if the College fees and levies are paid.



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Recovery of unpaid fees

In fairness to families who pay their school fees regularly and on time, our College will follow up all overdue school fee accounts.

- a) A reminder statement/notice/letter will be issued within 7 days to any family who has not settled their school fee account by the due date, where a payment plan or other arrangements are not in place.
- b) If payment or a suitable response is not received within 7 days of the reminder statement, contact with the parent will be made via telephone, SMS, mail or email.
- c) If suitable arrangements are unable to be made following the sending out of a reminder notice and personal contact, the principal or designated person may send out a Final Notice giving a further 2 weeks to pay.
- d) If, after 2 weeks from this Final Notice, satisfactory arrangements have not been reached, the account may be sent to the college Debt Collection agency. In serious cases, where there is clear capacity to pay outstanding fees, legal options may be pursued by the College.
- e) Legal costs, direct debit rejection fees (\$2.50 per rejection) and any debt collection costs (may incur a 15% administration fee) and/or other costs incurred will be at the family's expense.

Agreed Payment Plans

As mentioned in above, our College offers families the opportunity to pay the school fee account by regular instalments over the course of the year. All payment plans must be organised to include a regular schedule that will clear the school fee account by the last day of the school year.

Any variations to this must be negotiated with the Finance Office or Business Manager. To establish an Agreed Payment Plan, forms are available on the College website, Parent Portal or from the College Finance Office.

Plans may be set up to run 'until further notice', following discussion with the Finance Office. BPAY payments towards fee accounts are accepted at any time, credit is allowed to accumulate within reason.

Payment arrangements that lapse or cease without communicating with the College and causes accounts to fall into arrears, will be subject to the recovery of unpaid fees as outlined in this policy.

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Late Start Enrolment

New students entering Aquinas College after the commencement of the term may be charged on a pro-rata basis for the remaining weeks of the term, where appropriate, at the Principal's discretion.

Withdrawal of Enrolment

One school term's notice must be given to the College, in writing, prior to the removal of a student from the College, otherwise a term's fees will be charged as a genuine pre-estimate of the losses incurred by the College in having allocated resources, planning and expenditure related to the student.

For a reduction in fees, a written request may be made to the Principal at the time of notification and may be granted at the Principal's discretion.

Student textbooks, library books, laptops and all accessories are to be returned to the College. If these are not returned, the full replacement cost will be on charged to the fees account.

Outstanding fees must be settled within two weeks of exiting the College unless a payment arrangement has been negotiated and approved by the Principal or Business Manager. Any family failing to settle the account or to negotiate a payment plan may be referred to a debt collection agency for immediate recovery action. Should an exited family default on a repayment arrangement, the account may be referred immediately to a debt collection agency for recovery action.

Where appropriate, if a fee account is in credit upon withdrawal of the student, and the above conditions have been met, the fees in credit will be refunded.

Extended Leave/ Holding Enrolment Place

Fees will be payable for the whole term in which extended leave is taken. For a reduction in fees a written request must be made to the Principal at the time of notification and may be granted at the Principal's discretion. Consideration will be given to the length of the break, the nature of the leave, the time the student has been at the college, the number of previous leave occurrences, and the existence of student waiting lists

For further clarification regarding the above school fee and levy collection process, please contact the College Finance Office.



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APPENDIX: Recovery of Unpaid Fees Flowchart Fees Issued

