



Dear Parents and Caregivers and all members of our Catholic school communities,

## **UPDATE ON TUITION FEE RELIEF IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION - DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON SCHOOLS FOR TERM 2 IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

As the economic impacts of the COVID-19 response are being increasingly felt by our school communities, Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton, is fast tracking a range of school fee changes to commence from the start of Term 2.

- For those with an eligible government health concession card the automatic discount on the tuition fee component will increase from 70% to 100%.
- Two new concession card categories will be eligible for the 100% discount – the Job Seeker Payment (JSP) and the Farm Household allowance (FH). In addition, all Carer, Disability and Mobility card holders are now eligible regardless of their relationship status.
- For those yet to receive their cards, schools will accept as proof the digital version of the card from the MyGov app or a printed confirmation page from Centrelink.
- The concession will be automatic on presentation of the relevant concession card. Families should present their card or evidence to their school or college administration as soon as possible so that records can be updated before Term 2 invoices are issued. Invoicing will be delayed until Week 4 of Term 2 to allow for this. If an eligible concession card is presented after Term 2 invoicing in Week 4, the concession card discount will be applied retrospectively for Term 2 tuition fees.
- Although families are encouraged to pay their fees on time if they have the capacity, schools will extend the normal collection term to 28 days so families have the ability to delay their payment until their circumstances allow them to do so.
- Processes for the collection of unpaid fees have been suspended for families facing financial difficulty.
- Families without a concession card but who are experiencing financial stress are encouraged to contact their school Principal – fee concessions are available. These discussions will be strictly confidential and respectful.
- A simplified concession application form is available. To access this, please click [here](#).
- These arrangements will be reviewed again late in Term 2 for the remainder of the year.
- These automatic arrangements are in place for the tuition fee component of school fees which is set by Catholic Education. Further concessions may be available on school levies through the Principal on an individual basis.

As you would understand, these fee concessions will place a considerable strain and burden on our Catholic school budgets and will require very careful stewardship of our available financial resources. We will do all we possibly can to ensure that the faith-based, quality Catholic education we currently provide for all our students is not in any way compromised.



To assist us in this endeavour, we respectfully ask those families who have secure and ongoing employment to continue to support your Catholic school by meeting your school fee commitments as you are currently doing. We thank you for this support which I reiterate is crucial for the ongoing delivery of Catholic education throughout the Diocese of Rockhampton. I take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your support of our Catholic schools and in so doing your support of those many families in our schools who currently are experiencing financial hardship.

To those families in our schools who are facing very tough circumstances at present, we want you to know that you are part of a caring Catholic school community and that despite the current challenges we are committed to the ongoing education of your children. Catholic Education's Policy commitment that no child will be denied access to a Catholic school education because of genuine family financial stress is a Policy to which I am firmly committed as are your School Principals. We pray that these Tuition fee relief initiatives to assist those currently experiencing financial distress that I have detailed in this correspondence will help alleviate some anxiety and concern and will be welcome, practical assistance to families at this time.

If you have further questions, please contact your school or refer to a support document with Frequently Asked Questions that can be accessed [here](#). Also please do not hesitate to contact your school administration to make the necessary arrangements in relation to any Tuition fee relief that you may require as soon as staff return to school on 20 April 2020.

I would like to conclude by assuring you that our Principals, teachers and support staff are all working very hard to develop *Learning from Home* resources and enhanced ICT provision to deliver a faith-based, quality Catholic education to those students who may be presently learning from home. At the same time everyone is working with great commitment to ensure the continuation of all that a Catholic education entails for those students who are still in attendance at our schools. Your support as parents and care givers of our endeavours is sincerely appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Leesa Jeffcoat AM  
DIOCESAN DIRECTOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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