

Diocesan Policy Position

Collaboration within a Parish (Church and School)

Sound administration and clear accountability procedures within a parish avoids actions, which could jeopardise the confidence of a school's supporting community or a school's entitlement to government funding. Given legal and canonical requirements, it is necessary to make distinctions between funds used for school purposes and other parish purposes. Correct procedures and accountability will ensure that the rights and duties of all within the parish are acknowledged.

Charges Relating to Worship

Celebrations of the Eucharist and the Sacraments are a vital part of the Catholic formation of the members of the school community. Schools are exempt from any booking fees for these celebrations in the church or other parish facilities.

Use of School Facilities

Gatherings of parishioners are a vital part of the community development dimension of a parish. Provided facilities are free of school engagements, schools will allow the Church community to use school facilities for parish gatherings without charge.

Charges for the use of School Premises

In order to consider this issue its necessary to define the equities involved in the assets concerned. There are two equities to consider. The first is the equity of the parish in the land and buildings which are used by the school. This equity is enduring and does not extinguish. The second equity is the equity of government funding for capital works. This equity extinguishes over a twenty-year period.

Historically, it is acknowledged that in most cases, parishes have established the schools and operated them without any Government assistance over many decades. Since the very welcome advent of government funding, parishes and/or diocesan school authorities, often relying on the work of the diocesan schools office, have continued to operate the schools as an integral outreach of the parish. In this context the canonical ownership has not changed. Parents of students attending the school have paid fees of various sorts to the school for recurrent services and for the use of the capital infrastructure.

In the current funding paradigm, the raising of charges to the school budget by parishes is not contemplated. It is understood, that in the event of any such initiative being considered, the prevailing government equity in the capital infrastructure would need to be considered, and eliminated from the capital base on which any such charges were to be calculated. Proper use of government funding for schools is paramount for Catholic School Authorities in Queensland.

Use of other Parish Facilities by a School

In cases where charging for casual use of such facilities by a school is deemed appropriate, the charge should be reasonable and not exceed normal market rates.

This Policy is operative for 5 years as from 1 January 2019 and will be reviewed at the end of 2024