



# Archdiocese of Wellington

## ATTENDANCE DUES GUIDELINES

### 1. Catholic Schools are Integrated Schools

All Catholic schools in New Zealand (including those in the Archdiocese of Wellington) are integrated schools under the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 ("the Integration Act").

### 2. Proprietors of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese

The Integration Act defines the proprietor of an integrated school as the person or entity having primary responsibility for determining and supervising the maintenance of the special character of an integrated school and who owns, or holds in trust or leases, the land and buildings that constitute the school premises.

The six proprietors ("our proprietors") of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Wellington are:

1. Cardinal John Dew, the Archbishop of Wellington, proprietor of 38 primary schools and the following secondary schools:
  - Bishop Viard College, Porirua
  - Chanel College, Masterton
  - Garin College, Nelson; and
  - St Bernard's College, Lower Hutt.
2. Mission Colleges Lower Hutt Trust Board, proprietor of Sacred Heart College, Lower Hutt.
3. St Mary's College Wellington Limited, proprietor of St Mary's College, Thorndon
4. St Catherine's College Wellington Limited, proprietor of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie
5. Silverstream College Board of Proprietors, proprietor of St Patrick's College, Silverstream
6. St Patrick's College Wellington Board of Proprietors, proprietor of St Patrick's College, Wellington.

These guidelines have been approved by our proprietors who expect parish priests, lay pastoral leaders, school principals and attendance dues advisers to operate in accordance with them.

### 3. Obligation to pay Attendance Dues

Our proprietors are permitted to charge attendance dues in respect of students attending their schools.

Our proprietors require, as a condition of a student's enrolment and attendance at their schools, that the parents or other persons, accepting responsibility for the student's education, sign an Attendance Dues Agreement agreeing to pay attendance dues in respect of that student.

Attendance Dues Agreements are legally enforceable.

#### **4. Enrolment Procedures**

It is the responsibility of all principals to ensure that:

- (1) An Attendance Dues Agreement has been completed and signed by the parents or other persons accepting responsibility for a student's education, in respect of every student enrolling at and attending their schools.
- (2) All other enrolment forms and procedures have been fully and accurately completed for all new students.
- (3) Those signing Attendance Dues Agreements have been made aware that it creates a legal obligation for them to pay attendance dues in respect of the student concerned.
- (4) Clause 3 of the Attendance Dues Agreement has been drawn to their attention, particularly sub clauses 3.3 and 3.4 (which relate to the sharing of information with other proprietors and parishes).
- (5) Those signing Attendance Dues Agreements have been advised of the different ways in which attendance dues can be paid and the options for paying by instalments. Automatic payment authorities should be completed and signed by those who choose to make their payments by that means.
- (6) The attendance dues agreement and all other information required in order to charge attendance dues on behalf of the proprietor is promptly forwarded to the ADW attendance dues team.
- (7) The ADW attendance dues team is promptly notified of any changes in enrollment information.

#### **5. What are Attendance Dues used for?**

Our Proprietors belong to a National Scheme which raises loans for its members, enabling them to fund both existing schools and new school building work. These loans are repaid from attendance dues. This money is also used to pay insurance on school buildings, which is another legal obligation.

The Catholic school network in the Archdiocese is unsustainable unless our attendance dues collection is maintained at the highest possible level. To that end we need the support of all parents and other dues payers.

Nevertheless, it is the pastoral practice of our proprietors that no preference student will be denied access to an integrated Catholic school because of the inability of their families to pay attendance dues in full.

#### **6. Collecting Attendance Dues in the Archdiocese**

Our proprietors have agreed that their schools are a group of schools for the purpose of establishing attendance dues under the Integration Act.

Our proprietors have authorised the Archdiocese of Wellington (ADW) to collect attendance dues in respect of their group of schools and to maintain an attendance dues fund. All attendance dues collected will be paid into the fund and all loan and insurance payments (and any other group expenses) will be paid from it.

Our proprietors recognises that the ADW attendance dues team will need help with its work from people at a local (school and parish) level who are able to assist by:

- Providing local presence and knowledge; and
- Administering hardship rebates (and the write-off of arrears) for dues payers in circumstances where paying full attendance dues would result in genuine and undue hardship on the family of the applicant.

Every parish and secondary school is asked to appoint attendance dues advisers to work

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collaboratively with the ADW attendance dues team and their local schools and parishes on these matters.

### 7. Attendance Dues Accounts

Attendance dues accounts are sent out by the ADW attendance dues team.

All accounts are to be paid directly to ADW.

If attendance dues are paid to the school or parish, the money is to be receipted and immediately sent on to the ADW attendance dues team with details of who paid it.

Methods and options for payment are set out in the 2016 Attendance Dues Information Sheet.

### 8. ADW Contact Information

1. The ADW office is at the Catholic Centre, 22 Hill Street Wellington 6011.
2. The postal address is: "Attendance Dues" PO Box 1937 Wellington 6140
3. Telephone: 0800 462 725
4. Email: [dues@wn.catholic.org.nz](mailto:dues@wn.catholic.org.nz)

### 9. Appointment of Attendance Dues Advisers

As stated in Section 6:

- (a) The ADW attendance dues team relies on local assistance in carrying out its task of collecting attendance dues; and
- (b) Every parish and secondary school is asked to appoint attendance dues advisers to assist the ADW attendance dues team.

Please provide the ADW attendance dues team with the name, address, contact phone numbers and email addresses of attendance dues advisers appointed for a parish or college.

Parish attendance dues advisers should be appointed by the parish priest or lay pastoral leader (preferably on the recommendation or with the assistance of the parish finance committee) but may be appointed by the proprietor of the school or by someone authorised by the proprietor of the school to make such appointments.

College attendance dues advisers should be appointed by the college principal (on the recommendation or with assistance of one or more of the proprietor's appointees on the College Board of Trustees) but may be appointed by the proprietor of the college or by someone authorised by the proprietor to make such appointments.

Every parish and college should appoint as many attendance dues advisers as they consider are necessary to enable the work to be carried out effectively.

It is recommended that parishes appoint the principal of their primary schools (and/or people recommended by the principal) as parish attendance dues advisers.

Similarly, it is recommended that college principals (or their nominees) and one or more of the proprietor's appointee on the College Board of Trustees be appointed as college attendance dues advisers.

### 10.0 Role of Attendance Dues Advisers

The primary task of an attendance dues adviser is to use local presence and knowledge to facilitate the payment of attendance dues for the proprietors in respect of the parish or college they have been appointed to.

Attendance dues advisers will take all appropriate steps, e.g. letter, phone call or personal visit to those whose attendance dues are in arrears, in order to determine how best to advise the ADW attendance dues team on action that should or

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could be taken.

If possible, attendance dues advisers should try to help dues payers to manage their arrears. If there are pastoral considerations that should be taken into account, the parish priest or lay pastoral leader should be consulted.

An attendance dues adviser may, after examining the circumstances of each case, decide that the best option is one or more of the following:

- The dues payer should pay off the arrears in one lump sum;
- The arrears, in whole or in part, should be paid off by installments, preferably by automatic payment, at a rate agreed on with the dues payer;
- A hardship rebate should be processed;
- Arrears should, in part, be written off; or
- Some other option.

The decision taken must be conveyed to the ADW attendance dues team so that the relevant attendance dues records can be updated.

An attendance dues adviser who considers that debt should be put into the hands of a debt collecting agency will make a recommendation to that effect to the ADW attendance dues team. For its part, the ADW attendance dues team will not refer any debt to a debt collecting agency unless such action has been recommended by an attendance dues adviser or approved by the proprietor of the school concerned.

The Integration Act authorises suspension of students on the grounds of non-payment of attendance dues. If exceptional circumstances warranting suspension are thought to exist the case is to be referred to the ADW attendance dues team for the consideration and decision of the proprietor of the school concerned.

### **Authority of Attendance Dues Advisers to Act**

Attendance dues advisers shall have authority to individually undertake any and all of the tasks and responsibilities of attendance dues advisers expressed or implied by these guidelines but only in respect of the parishes or colleges they were appointed to.

### **Parish Assistance with Payment of Attendance Dues**

Although not required to do so, several parishes in the Archdiocese generously reserve funds to help families who have permanent or temporary difficulty paying their attendance dues.

Our proprietors commend the practice. It provides practical help to parishioners in need and helps to alleviate the burden otherwise borne by dues payers who promptly pay their accounts in full.