

Frequently asked questions

School fees

1. Why are the school fees changing?

Catholic schools are funded through a combination of government funding and parent fees.

As government funding does not meet the full cost of providing Catholic education, fees remain an important part of funding teaching, learning, student wellbeing and the day-to-day life of our school.

For 2027, MACS has set fee guidelines in response to significant cost pressures, including higher operating costs and the expected cost of salary and conditions improvements under the next enterprise agreement (EBA).

We know any fee increase affects family budgets, which is why we are committed to keeping fees as affordable as possible.

2. What support is available for my family?

As a Catholic school, we are committed to ensuring that financial hardship does not prevent a family from participating fully in our school community. We recognise that circumstances can change, sometimes unexpectedly.

Please contact Principal Nathan Owen for a private and confidential conversation about your circumstances.

Concessional fees and other fee-support arrangements may be available, including for eligible Health Care Card holders. We will work with families respectfully and sensitively to understand what support may be available.

Class size and structures and student learning

3. Is our school changing class structures?

No. Our school class structures will remain as they are for 2027. Straight grades is our preferred structure at St Catherine of Siena, Armstrong Creek.

4. Why is the school increasing class sizes?

Planning guidelines from MACS are for schools to work towards an average class size of around 25 students across the school. Our class size average for 2027 is 23.25 students.

This is a planning guide, not a fixed number for every classroom and schools continue to take account of student learning needs, room size, year level and the particular circumstances of each cohort when forming classes.

5. Will larger classes impact my child's learning or the attention they receive?

Class sizes within this range are consistent with those used across Victorian education systems and are not expected to affect student learning and flourishing. Educational research consistently shows that class sizes within this range preserve student achievement and individual progress.

In our classrooms, what matters most is high-quality teaching, purposeful lesson planning, and the connection our teachers build with every child.

This adjustment allows us to keep our tuition fees manageable while ensuring our classrooms remain well-resourced environments where your child receives personal attention, care, and encouragement to flourish.

Staffing changes

6. What staffing changes will be occurring in 2027?

Our staff are central to the life of our school, and we recognise that changes to roles and responsibilities can affect people who have made a valued contribution to our community. Our goal has been to direct our school's resources where they make the greatest difference to your child's education.

For 2027, we remain committed to valuing and supporting our educators. While there may be some minor changes, these changes will help us maintain well-supported classes, invest in our teaching staff, and continue the programs and support that help students learn, grow and flourish while ensuring the school remains financially sustainable for the future.

Tiered family fee structure

7. What is a tiered family-fee structure?

Catholic schools receive government funding on a per-student basis. The funding model assumes that a school will also receive a parent contribution for each enrolled child.

Under a flat family-fee model, the same tuition amount is charged whether a family has one child or several children at the school. This can create a gap between the funding a school needs for each student and the fee income it receives.

Moving to a tiered structure brings fee arrangements closer to the way school funding is calculated, while continuing to recognise the additional cost for larger families through lower fees for younger siblings.

8. Our approach to tiered family fees?

Many MACS primary schools already use a tiered family-fee structure. In 2027, the remaining primary schools will move from a flat family fee to a tiered structure.

Under a tiered structure, fees are set for the first child, with lower fees for each additional sibling.

We know that financial circumstances can change, and support is available for families who may be finding fees difficult. Eligible families can continue to access concessional-fee arrangements

If you would like to discuss your personal circumstances, please reach out to the school directly.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS)

9. Who is MACS?

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) is responsible for almost 300 Catholic primary and secondary schools, educating more than 120,000 students across the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

As one of the fastest-growing education systems in Victoria, MACS supports schools to provide high-quality learning, strong wellbeing support and faith formation for the growing number of families choosing Catholic education each year.

10. What is its role in our school?

The role of MACS is to oversee a system of almost 300 schools educating nearly 120,000 students, ensuring Catholic education remains strong, sustainable and accessible for generations to come.

When MACS was established, it reflected the reality that Catholic education had grown beyond what individual schools could reasonably manage alone.

Today's schools operate in an increasingly complex environment, requiring expertise in governance, educational improvement, workforce planning, child safety, finance, infrastructure and compliance.

A coordinated system enables schools to focus on what matters most: delivering an outstanding education centred on faith and the flourishing of every student.

11. What are the benefits of being part of MACS?

The strength of being part of MACS is that schools retain their local identity and leadership, while drawing on the support, resources and shared responsibility of a much larger Catholic education community.

Over the past two years, MACS has implemented its Vision for Instruction and Vision for Engagement strategies to strengthen learning and wellbeing outcomes across the system. These reforms are helping schools deliver the high-quality educational experience that families increasingly expect and value.

Our recent NAPLAN results provide further evidence that our focus on evidence-based teaching and student engagement is making a difference.

We are proud that more families are choosing Catholic education and recognise the value our schools provide to students and their communities.