

Dear Parents and Caregivers

I write on behalf of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools to acknowledge the challenges of 2020 and to highlight some exciting initiatives that will be implemented for the 2021 school year.

It goes without saying that 2020 has presented unforeseen challenges for every Australian and, indeed, for families and children. I have been extremely proud of the way that our Catholic schools have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly our continued commitment to the care, wellbeing and academic development of our students, and also the attention that we have paid to family circumstances. I especially acknowledge that, during this pandemic, several families have been impacted in a range of adverse ways, including financially.

I am pleased that where this has occurred our schools have responded with fee remissions. I wish to reassure all families that, where required, these remissions will continue into 2021.

At the same time, as we approach 2021, I wish to highlight two decisions of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools, which will have positive and exciting benefits for families and students.

1. Increased resource provision to schools

Through internal reorganisation of and prudent management by the Catholic Education Office, the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools has been able to increase the resourcing provided to Catholic schools to support Principals to continue to strengthen the delivery of high quality Catholic education to children and young people.

To complement this, beginning in 2021, Catholic schools across South Australia will be divided into six regions. Within each region, an experienced educator will be appointed to the role of School Performance Leader, who will manage and coordinate the educational provision, formation opportunities, support services and infrastructure development across the region.

The School Performance Leader will be supported by Education Advisors in Catholic Identity, Learning and Wellbeing, and Student Diversity who, together, will support Catholic school Principals to continue to provide high quality Catholic education to the full range of children and young people in our schools. In addition, Literacy and Numeracy Coaches will be assigned to each region to work alongside teachers and schools on the delivery and evaluation of educational programs in these key areas.

It goes without saying that, in 2021, Catholic Education South Australia is committed to providing our more than 46 000 children and young people with the highest quality educational experiences and outcomes.

2. Supporting all families in Catholic primary schools

Catholic Education South Australia endeavours to support families at all times and, particularly, during the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic is presenting. With that in mind, I am pleased to announce that at its August 2020 meeting, the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools resolved to lower the school fees of every Catholic primary school in 2021 under its *Making Catholic Education More Affordable* initiative.

In making this decision, the Commission affirmed the necessity of continuing to support families whose circumstances have been affected by COVID-19, and sought to demonstrate its commitment to making Catholic education more accessible and affordable for all families enrolled in a Catholic primary school across South Australia.

Each school is currently planning its new fees for 2021 and, while the exact level of fee reduction in each primary school may vary from school to school depending on each school's circumstances and family needs, you can expect a formal announcement of the revised school fee in your child's school before the end of this term.

The Commission also resolved that to provide a clearer and more predictable picture of your school's total fees, each primary school will move to a simpler fee structure rather than a combination of different levies. In addition, each school will introduce a much lower fee for families on low income to reinforce the absolute priority that Catholic Education is accessible to all families.

Please visit the Catholic Education South Australia website for more information www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/fee-reductions.

I am sure you would agree that these decisions are both timely and beneficial as we continue to work together to help shape and nurture our students to become thriving people, capable learners and leaders for the world God desires.

Yours sincerely



Professor Denis W. Ralph

Chair
South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools

3 September 2020