



WILLIAM CLARKE COLLEGE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION GUIDE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

William Clarke College (the College) operates for the purpose of providing children with a quality Christian based education at an affordable price by comparison to other like schools.

Not all families, as a result of their individual family and financial circumstances, will be able to afford or continue to afford an independent education without some financial assistance being provided by the College.

We recognise this and seek to make the experience at William Clarke College accessible to a wide range of families through the provision of **specific** financial assistance to individual families in need.

Financial assistance is means tested and only applies to the tuition fee, not to the Year Levy or other ad hoc charges.

THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – WHO IT IS AIMED AT

The Financial Assistance Program delivers assistance at two opportunities:

1. To support the Offer of an Enrolment - Pre-Enrolment:

- Financial Assistance is offered for children at the point of enrolment entry to the College and this occurs during the enrolment process.
- The aim is to provide access to the College for children where the family might not otherwise be able to reasonably afford a William Clarke College education due to their individual personal, family and financial circumstances.

[You are unable to apply for Financial Assistance (Pre-Enrolment) without first having lodged an Application for Enrolment and paid the Enrolment Application fee].

2. After the child has been enrolled – Post-Enrolment:

- Financial Assistance is offered to families who, whilst already enrolled at the College, have experienced a significant change for the worse in their financial circumstances, however that arises.
- The aim is to enable children to continue at the College even though the family is facing changed financial circumstances due to adverse events that arose post enrolment commencing.

The College is not able to respond favourably to **all** applications but conducts a streamlined process to determine how the College resources can be allocated most appropriately.

We understand the sensitivities involved in you providing personal and financial information to us. The information you divulge is treated with strict confidence (see later). It is necessary for us to have certain information so as to make prudent and wise decisions on how we can support you, whilst satisfying our obligations to our College Council and the government under the Education Act.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION PROCESS

Within a framework of meeting stewardship and governance responsibilities, the process for a Financial Assistance application is kept to a minimum with confidentiality maintained throughout.

The process is as follows:

- The family contacts the Business Manager's Office to discuss their need to apply for financial assistance.
- The family is sent this Information Guide and the Financial Assistance **Application Form** to complete.
- The family completes the form and lodges it with the Business Manager or by email to financialassistance@wcc.nsw.edu.au.
- The family is contacted to arrange a time for a **meeting** to discuss the family circumstances.
- The **meeting** is held with the Head and Business Manager – face-to-face or online.
- For Financial Assistance (Pre-Enrolment) applications, a sub-committee of College Council assesses the circumstances (identification information is removed) and the College's ability to assist financially.
- For Financial Assistance (Post-Enrolment) applications, the Head and Business Manager assess the need and the College's ability to assist financially.
- The College writes to the family to indicate the **nature of support** which will be provided:
 - If Pre-enrolment, this will form part of the Letter of Offer of a place at the College.
 - If Post-enrolment, the College will write to you outlining the level of support to be provided, the duration of support and any subsequent review dates.

Further detail about each main component follows.

1. THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION FORM

This form enables applicants to provide information to the College. The information provided is necessary for us to make a responsible assessment of the support needed. The information requested covers:

On Page 1

- Name, address and family relationships.
- Basic information about your employment situation.

On Page 2

- Summary information of your assets and liabilities.
- Summary information of your income and expenses – reasonable estimates are acceptable.

Page 3 is the statutory declaration.

If your taxation structures are simple, the form requests only minimal supporting documentation.

Additionally, if your assets consist of a business or investment you own, or part own, through any entities (including sole proprietorship, companies, trusts, etc), then there will be additional information required with the application so that the College can properly assess your business and investment relationships. The information should include financial statements and tax returns of the most recently completed tax year.



2. THE MEETING

This meeting is a vital component of the process as it is our way of gathering the information necessary in properly understanding your unique set of family circumstances. It allows us to make sense of the Application Form and your financial position. It also allows us to consider and explore the *nature of support* the College may be able to provide.

The Nature of Support

The nature of support under the Financial Assistance Program could be by way of:

1. **To support the Offer of an Enrolment – Financial Assistance (Pre-enrolment):**
 - Short-term or long-term assistance. (Both are subject to a review process);
or
 - A reduction of the tuition fee by a fixed amount; or
 - A reduction of the tuition fee by a percentage.

2. **After the child is enrolled – Financial Assistance (Post-enrolment):**
 - Short-term or long-term assistance. (Both are subject to a review process);
or
 - No reduction in the tuition amount, but a change to the terms and conditions. For example, providing a temporary moratorium/deferral of tuition fee payments. Payments will then be caught up later; or
 - A reduction of the tuition fee by a fixed amount; or
 - A reduction of the tuition fee by a percentage; or
 - In the case of an existing outstanding balance on the fee account, adjustments to the terms and conditions of payment of that balance; or
 - A combination of measures.

Financial assistance will only apply to the tuition fee. It does not apply to any extras including the Year Levy, activity charges or discretionary items such as extra-curricular sport, music or drama charges. These extras charges are payable by the parents and not subject to financial assistance.

The College is not always able to provide financial assistance by way of a reduction to the tuition fee. Therefore, an application does not guarantee support. The College weighs up the circumstances and its own stewardship and governance responsibilities in reaching its assessment.



3. THE OUTCOME

The College does not require anything special of a child who is a recipient of financial assistance. Like all other students at the College, they would be expected to comply with all College rules and expectations and contribute to College life in a positive way.

For Financial Assistance (Pre-Enrolment)

The College sends a Letter of Offer, which covers both the status of enrolment and the outcome of the Financial Assistance application. The possible outcomes of the combined processes are:

1. There is no enrolment place available.
2. There is an enrolment place available, but without financial assistance.
3. There is an enrolment place available with financial assistance. In this case we would indicate the *nature and amount of financial assistance* available.

The family then considers the Letter of Offer and decides whether or not to accept.

Financial Assistance (Post-Enrolment)

The College will write to you, generally within two weeks of the meeting to outline the nature of financial support that is available.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The College does not divulge details of financial assistance in any public form or to any third party.

Within the College, information about the existence of financial assistance is maintained by the Head and the Business Manager. Their personal support staff have access to the details necessary to arrange appointments and manage your fee account with the College. Access to the database containing such information is restricted to these people only.

Strict internal confidentiality is maintained. For example, Teachers, Grade Coordinators, Heads of Year, Heads of Faculty, Mentors, Heads of House, Heads of Schools, the Deputy Head (except when acting for the Head during his absence), Counsellors, administration staff etc are NOT provided ANY information about financial assistance. Even when applications for Financial Assistance (Pre-Enrolment) are reviewed by College Council, they do not see names, addresses or workplaces of people receiving support, they review a set of circumstances.

The College does NOT tell your child about the existence of financial assistance. However, the decision whether to tell your child that they are a recipient of financial assistance is your decision alone. We would ask that if you choose to tell your child, you do so because they have the maturity to keep the information confidential.



STEWARDSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Head and Business Manager are accountable to the College Council for the proper running of the Financial Assistance Program. However, within this accountability, confidentiality is protected.

Generally, support will not be provided in the following situations unless there are very extenuating circumstances:

- Your financial position appears to be as a direct result of lifestyle choices – for example you have over-extended yourself on the purchase of a home which has caused the financial difficulty.
- You own lifestyle or investment assets such as a luxury car, a boat or a rental property.
- As parents you collectively are able to afford the education costs for your child, but one parent chooses not to be a financial supporter of the child.
- You have not made reasonable attempts to review and reduce your expenditure and are attempting to maintain lifestyle whilst seeking support from the College.
- You have an existing debt to the College where you have not proactively sought to come to suitable arrangements with us or the College has already commenced debt recovery action.

Other considerations:

- A divorce or separation, whether or not it consists of agreed financial arrangements between the parents, will not automatically give rise to Financial Assistance.
- If you have substantial investment funds, funds in bank accounts or education trusts it would be expected that these funds would be utilised first.
- The process will consider the financial support available through the child's grandparents and other family sources.
- The process will consider the ability of the parents to first borrow to fund the education, either in the short-term or long-term.
- Generally, it will be expected that both parents are working at least 20 hours per week. However, the College will consider extenuating circumstances.

Financial assistance is more favourably considered to families in the following special circumstances such as:

- Prolonged and significant medical issues of a child, parent, parents or caregiver.
- One or both parents have a disability which limits the income earning capacity of the family.
- Single parent families.
- Prolonged periods of unemployment.
- Business failure for those who are self-employed or run a family business.
- Families with multiple children enrolled at the College (this acts as a more directed way of providing sibling discounts).
- Dependent children under the age of twelve months, which results in one parent not being able to work full-time for that period, particularly where the cost of childcare would outweigh the after-tax amount from part-time work.

In the event of the death of a parent of an enrolled child, the College can provide support of up to 100% tuition fee relief for up to two school term's immediately following that death.



REVIEW PROCESS

The Head and the Business Manager, as part of their stewardship and governance responsibilities conduct reviews of the assistance provided on a case-by-case basis.

If the assistance that has been provided is longer term, there will be a review at least every two years. This is to establish whether your circumstances are largely the same or if they are better or worse. Adjustments to the assistance provided can be made as a result of reviews.

For short-term assistance there will be a review at the end of the nominated term.

TRUST

We accept information provided by you in trust and good faith.

We trust that if your financial circumstances improve during the period your child is receiving financial assistance, you will inform us so that we can adjust downwards the level of support by the College. This allows the College to support other families.

We are also happy to hear from you if your circumstances changes for the worse.

Any questions about the Financial Assistance Program can be directed to financialassistance@wcc.nsw.edu.au.