

14<sup>th</sup> July, 2023



Dear Parents

This letter acknowledges the importance of your financial contribution to the school through the payment of fees and levies. As I work through the budgeting processes for 2024, I wanted to take the opportunity to outline how the school fees you contribute are being utilized to provide the best possible education for your child/ren at St Benedict's. I value and sincerely thank you for continuing to maintain your financial commitment. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the current cost of living crisis that is impacting just about everything right now and assure you I remain mindful of its impact, especially as I plan for the future.

Your financial contribution plays a vital role in enabling us to maintain a high standard of education and offer a nurturing and conducive learning environment for our students. I want to assure you that we are dedicated to utilizing these funds responsibly and efficiently. Our financial statements show that we are operating well within our budget for the year, and it is anticipated that we may arrive at a small surplus by the end of the year. This will support the safeguarding of a healthy available cash flow to respond to unplanned and unforeseen expenditure, particularly around school maintenance.

Below is an overview of how family contributions via school fees are being used:

#### **Staffing Salary Expenditure**

For the most part, our staffing costs are covered by Federal and State Grants issued to the school as a per student amount. In 2023 we received approximately \$6.9 million dollars from both levels of Government. Staffing costs exceeded this funding and hence school fees have contributed to the shortfall to the value of \$600,000.

#### **Non-Salary Expenditure**

Our school relies on the expenses associated with general school operation costs; eg tuition expenses, staff professional development Insurance, electricity, phone, water, rates, photocopying, cleaning contracts and general running expenses. These costs do not decrease from year to year but rather they increase, some significantly on previous years, particularly insurance and electricity costs. In 2023, school fees and levies have contributed \$800,000 towards these costs which is significant.

#### **Building Grounds and Maintenance**

As St Benedict's grows in its age, so does the maintenance requirements to ensure the grounds and building facilities remain in excellent and safe condition. Our maintenance costs this year are projected to be finalised at approximately \$140,000.

#### **Capital Expenditure**

The acquisition of technology is an important aspect of our school financial operation each year. School levies, contributed directly by parents support the purchase of iPads for Year 3 and 5 students who retain these tools for two years. School fees further support the acquisition of additional technology. This year, that included the refresh of new laptops and iPads for teaching staff. In total \$200,00 will be spent. Further capital expenditure of roughly \$125,000 has planned for this year and included:

- Purchase of a new school utility
- Reflooring toilets near Café
- Fencing around Prep area (to be completed in September)
- Additional Shed for Grounds Staff

- Shade Sails for Senior Area

### **Our New Building**

The extension to the hall building project has been completed. The total cost of this new facility was not much under \$3million dollars. The school has taken a loan of \$2.25million and made a cash contribution of roughly \$750,000. Our total loan repayments across all loans will be approximately \$280,000. This year we charge families a capital levy of \$650 to assist with capital building projects across the school as well as the loan repayments on loans we take out.

### **Payment of Fees**

Thank you to families who have direct debit arrangements in place as the most convenient and our preferred option for the payment of fees. This ensures regular and planned income to help us manage our school accounts. For those families not on a payment plan, we will monitor your fee payments over the remaining six months, ensuring the balance of your family statement is fully met. If any family is struggling financially, please reach out to us. Processes and procedures do exist to support but rely on timely communication.

I hope the above information has clarified the operational costs involved in running St Benedict's School. In the spirit of transparency, I encourage you to reach out to me if you have any specific concerns or suggestions related to utilization of school fees. I value your partnership and input and together we can plan for a successful future. School Fees and Levies for 2024 will be set over the coming weeks and once approved by the School Board, I will share with the wider community.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Davis  
Principal