

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This document sets out the policy that underpins the Attendance Dues Scheme, its context, use and the roles of stakeholders to ensure its successful management.
- 1.2. Under the Education and Training Act 2020, the Diocese is permitted to collect Attendance Dues. The majority of Attendance Dues are used to service loans that enable the funding of new school building work.
- 1.3. In consultation with local primary schools every parish is requested to appoint an attendance dues adviser, likewise colleges are requested to appoint an advisor. The advisors work with the Diocese Attendance Dues team to ensure the successful management of the scheme.
- 1.4. Every principal in the Diocese must ensure that an attendance dues agreement is signed by every new family who is enrolling at the school. Furthermore, principals must ensure the timeliness and accuracy of information collected and ensure families are informed of payment options.
- 1.5. The scheme has criteria for hardship rebates and arrears write-offs supported with an appeals process.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. All Catholic schools in New Zealand (including those in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch) are state integrated schools under the Education and Training Act 2020.
- 2.2. The Education Act means that the proprietors of integrated schools can charge attendance dues and imposes a legal obligation on parents or other people (“dues payers”) who have, by signing Attendance Dues Agreements, accepted as a condition of enrolment, responsibility for the education of students enrolled at and attending integrated schools.
- 2.3. “Proprietors”, are those who have primary responsibility for determining and maintaining the special character of integrated schools and who own (or hold in trust or lease) the land and buildings that constitute school premises.
- 2.4. The Bishop of Christchurch is the proprietor of all 28 primary schools in the Diocese and the following secondary schools:
 - Marian College, Christchurch
 - John Paul II High School, Greymouth
 - Catholic Cathedral College, Christchurch
 - Roncalli College, Timaru
- 2.5. In these Attendance Dues Guidelines, the term “proprietor” refers to the proprietor of integrated Catholic schools in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch only.

3. NEED FOR ATTENDANCE DUES

- 3.1. The proprietor in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch belong to a National Attendance Dues Scheme which services loans for its members, enabling him to fund new school building work. These loans are repaid from attendance dues. Each year, the majority of attendance dues collected on behalf of the proprietor of Catholic schools is used to service loans.
- 3.2. The balance of attendance dues collected on behalf of the proprietors in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch is used to pay insurance on integrated school buildings, collection costs and some building-related costs. The Proprietor needs the highest possible level of payment of attendance dues to ensure he is able to make the required payments to the National Attendance Dues Scheme and pay all other expenses. Nevertheless, it is the pastoral practice of the proprietor in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch that no “preference student” will be denied access to an integrated Catholic school because of the inability of their dues payers to pay attendance dues in full.

4. COLLECTING ATTENDANCE DUES IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH (CDOC)

- 4.3. The proprietor in CDOC has agreed that his schools shall be a group of schools for the purpose of establishing attendance dues under the Integration Act.
- 4.4. CDOC is undertaking the collection of attendance dues in- house through its attendance dues team (the CDOC Attendance Dues team).
- 4.5. The Proprietor recognises that the CDOC Attendance Dues team will require assistance at a local level from people able to provide presence and local knowledge as necessary.
Each parish priest, in consultation with the local primary school, is asked to appoint an attendance dues adviser/s to work collaboratively with the CDOC attendance dues team. Likewise, Secondary Principals are asked to appoint an attendance dues adviser/s to work collaboratively with the CDOC attendance dues team.
- 4.6. The CDOC Attendance Dues team will work with the attendance dues advisers to administer hardship rebates (and write-off arrears) for dues payers in circumstances where paying full attendance dues would result in genuine and undue hardship on the family of the applicant.
- 4.7. These guidelines have been approved by Diocesan Finance Council and College of Consultors, who expect parish priests, school principals, and attendance dues advisers to co-operate with each other and operate in accordance with them.

5. ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS AT INTEGRATED CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH

- 5.1. A new student is not validly enrolled at any integrated Catholic school in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch unless and until the student's dues payers have signed an attendance dues agreement with the proprietor of the school concerned, using the Attendance Dues Agreement Form, thereby agreeing, as a condition of enrolment, to pay attendance dues in respect of the student.
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of the principal of every integrated Catholic school in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch to ensure that an attendance dues agreement signed by the dues payers concerned has been obtained in respect of every student attending their school.
- 5.3. It is also the principal's responsibility to ensure that:
 - 5.3.1. Enrolment forms and procedures are fully and accurately completed for all new students.
 - 5.3.2. Dues payers are fully informed about attendance dues and their obligations to pay them. The information in the Attendance Dues Agreement Form can be used for this purpose.
 - 5.3.3. Dues payers are advised of the different ways in which attendance dues can be paid and the options for paying by instalments. Refer to CDOC Website for payment options.
 - 5.3.4. 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 CDOC Attendance Dues team.
- 5.4. The CDOC Attendance Dues team is promptly notified of any changes in enrolment information. Student Enrolment Information and the Privacy Act 2020
 - 5.4.5. Personal information will be collected and held by the proprietor and the CDOC Attendance Dues team as his collection agent, and used for administering the invoicing and collection of attendance dues and/or for assessing eligibility for any attendance dues rebate or write-off.
 - 5.4.6. Personal information will also be shared with Attendance Dues Advisors. For the same purpose outlined in 5.4.1.

6. ATTENDANCE DUES ACCOUNTS

- 6.1. The level of attendance dues payable in respect of students attending all integrated Catholic schools in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch is reviewed annually.
All attendance dues accounts are sent to dues payers by the CDOC Attendance Dues team.
- 6.2. Dues payers are expected to pay directly to the CDOC Attendance Dues team and must do so promptly. The accepted methods of payment are automatic payment, internet banking, credit and debit card through Paylink. If dues payers pay their attendance dues to the school or parish, the money is to be receipted and immediately sent on to the CDOC Attendance Dues team with details of who paid it.

6.3. CDOC Attendance Dues team Contact Information

Address: 391 Moorhouse Avenue, Christchurch
Please ask for a team member at Reception.

Postal address: PO Box PO Box 4544, Christchurch 8140

Email: dues@cdoc.nz

Phone: 03 378 3642 or 03 353 0758 Website: [Attendance Dues - Catholic Diocese of Christchurch](#)

7. APPOINTMENT OF ATTENDANCE DUES ADVISERS

- 7.1. Responsibility for the administration of attendance dues lies with the proprietor who, in turn, has appointed the CDOC Attendance Dues team as their agent to carry out this task.
- 7.2. As noted in section 4.4, the CDOC Attendance Dues team needs local assistance with this task. For that reason every parish is asked to appoint attendance dues advisers to assist the CDOC Attendance Dues team.
- 7.3. The Parish Priest is by default the Attendance Dues Adviser for the primary schools within his parish.
- 7.4. The Secondary School Principal is by default the Attendance Dues Adviser for his or her school.
- 7.5. The Parish Priest or Secondary School Principal can appoint Attendance Dues Advisers to carry out the role if he or she chooses.
- 7.6. The appointment of an Attendance Dues Adviser by a Parish Priest, should be discussed with the principal of the relevant school, before any appointment is made.
- 7.7. Each Parish Priest or Secondary School Principal should appoint as many Attendance Dues Advisers as he or she considers necessary to enable the work to be carried out effectively.
- 7.8. Annually, parishes and secondary schools must provide the CDOC Attendance Dues team with the name, address, contact phone numbers and email addresses of attendance dues advisers appointed for the parish or secondary school.
- 7.9. 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 schools they were appointed to.

8. ROLE OF ATTENDANCE DUES ADVISERS

- 8.1. Attendance dues advisers use local presence and knowledge to facilitate the payment of attendance dues for the proprietor in respect of the school or colleges they were appointed to.
- 8.2. The primary task of attendance dues advisers is to be **responsible for confirming hardship** in respect of the school or college that are appointed.
- 8.3. Attendance dues advisers will take all appropriate steps, e.g. letter, phone call or personal visit to dues payers whose attendance dues are in arrears, to confirm hardship.
- 8.4. Hardship exists in circumstances where paying the full attendance dues would result in genuine and undue hardship on the family of the dues payer.
 - 8.4.1. Hardship may exist in the following circumstances:
 - Loss of income/redundancy,
 - Death of the main income earner,
 - Extended unemployment,
 - Family reasons (including the number of children a family is paying attendance dues for)
- 8.5. After confirming hardship, the Attendance Dues Adviser should notify the CDOC Attendance Dues Team of the existence of hardship. This notification may include a suggestion of a rebate or write-off figure (e.g. 50%). The suggested rebate or write-off is confidential to the attendance dues adviser and CDOC Attendance Dues Team.
- 8.6. The CDOC Attendance Dues Team, after receiving notification of hardship, becomes responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of rebate or write-off is applied to the dues payer account.
- 8.7. If an Attendance Dues Adviser cannot confirm hardship, the adviser should recommend that the debt be placed in the hands of a debt collecting agency. The CDOC 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.
- 8.8. The Education 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 presented to the CDOC Attendance Dues team for the consideration and decision of the proprietor of the school concerned.
- 8.9. Parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch are not required to make up for attendance dues that are unpaid or have been rebated or written off. However, several parishes generously provide funds to help families who have permanent or temporary difficulty paying their attendance dues. The Proprietor commends the practice as helping to alleviate the burden otherwise borne by due payers who pay their accounts in full and on time.

9. APPROVAL OF HARDSHIP REBATES AND ARREARS WRITE-OFFs

9.1. Introduction

- 9.2.1. Hardship rebates and the write-off of attendance dues arrears are a practical means of helping in circumstances where paying the full attendance due would result in genuine and undue hardship to a due payer's family.
- 9.2.2. The granting of hardship rebates and write-offs is the responsibility of the CDOC Attendance Dues Team.
- 9.2.3. The CDOC Attendance Dues Team will discuss affordability and rebate options with dues payers, with the intention that the account balance is reduced to zero owing within the calendar year.
- 9.2.4. When approved, hardship rebates will reduce attendance dues owing for the current year. Write-offs will reduce arrears of attendance dues by the amount (or percentage) specified in the approval.
- 9.2.5. The granting of hardship rebates and write-offs is confidential to relevant Parish, school, and CDOC personnel.
- 9.2.6. Unless exceptional circumstances exist, hardship rebates will be granted in part only because all dues payers are expected to pay something.
- 9.2.7. The ability of dues payers to pay at least something needs to be carefully assessed. This statement applies to all applications and is as applicable to a dues payer's second or subsequent application as it is to the first. In addition, dues payers who receive a rebate and/or write-off should be informed that they will be expected to pay all attendance dues (or a greater portion of them) the following year unless exceptional circumstances are found to exist at that time.
- 9.2.8. The CDOC Attendance Dues team may, after consultation with the head of finance at the Diocesan Office, request that a hardship application is revisited to fit within these guidelines where it appears the criteria has not been met or due process not correctly followed or completed. The consultation on revisiting the application will be with the attendance dues adviser(s).

9.2. Procedure for Approval: All Application

- 9.2.1. The procedure to be followed in processing applications for hardship rebates and write-offs is as follows:
 - a) The dues payer is to complete and sign Form. This form is downloadable from the CDOC website and all attendance dues advisers should ensure they keep copies of it.
 - b) An attendance dues adviser will communicate with the dues payer, check the application form has been completed and ascertain whether genuine hardship exists.
- 9.2.2. After confirming hardship, the attendance dues adviser must forward the completed forms to the CDOC Attendance Dues team. The Dues team will assist with an appropriate level of hardship rebate and/or write-off. Payment arrangements will be recorded and the dues payer's attendance dues account adjusted.
- 9.2.3. In some circumstances (see section 9.4 below), the attendance dues adviser will not be able to confirm hardship. The attendance dues adviser should still follow the procedure outlined above but will make a recommendation on the appropriate action. The documentation is then sent to the CDOC Attendance Dues team where the decision will be made.
- 9.2.4. The CDOC Attendance Dues Team does not have the authority to approve:
 - 1) Hardship rebates and/or write-offs that will exceed 80% of the total attendance dues (including arrears) owing by the applicant.
 - 2) Hardship rebates that will result in total hardship rebates exceeding 10% of total current dues charged for the relevant school that year.
 - 3) Write-offs that will result in total arrears written off exceeding 5% of total current dues charged for the relevant school that year.
- 9.2.5. 1-3 require the approval of the head of finance at the Diocesan Office.

10. APPEALS: Process to appeal decisions on hardship rebate

- 10.1. A dues payer whose application for a hardship rebate has been declined; or who is dissatisfied with the amount rebated or written may appeal against the decision.
- 10.2. A complaint that an attendance dues adviser or any other person in the parish has failed to act on a request for a hardship rebate or write-off may also be the subject of an appeal.
- 10.3. An appeal must be in writing and should explain what decision is being appealed against and why. The appeal should be forwarded to "The Appeals Committee" c/o the CDOC Attendance Dues team, **PO Box 4544, Christchurch 8140**
- 10.4. An appeal should be made as soon as possible after the decision appealed against was given. An appeal will not be invalidated by delay but delay without good reason is a factor an appeals committee may take into account when making a decision on the appeal. Every appeal will be heard by an appeals committee appointed for the purpose by the proprietor.
- 10.5. The appeals committees will convene to hear the appeal and will invite the dues payer and the person whose decision is being appealed against, to attend and/or to provide additional information. Parties may be represented at the hearing by others. Provided invitations to attend were sent (and the parties given adequate time to respond), the appeals committee may proceed to hear and determine an appeal on the stipulated date even if one or both parties does not respond to the invitation to attend or provide additional information.
- 10.6. The CDOC Attendance Dues team may provide the appeals committee with a background paper on issues relevant to the appeal. If so, a copy must be sent to both parties with the appeals committee invitation to attend the hearing of the appeal.
- 10.7. The appeals committee decision, which will be final, will be delivered in writing and posted to the dues payer and the person whose decision was appealed against.