



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

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ABN 29 411 978 418

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Dear Parents and Guardians of Star of the Sea students,

The College Community welcomes you to the upcoming 2018 College year. We extend a special welcome to those students and their families who are joining us for the first time.

In January this year, we welcomed Ms Mary O'Connor to the role of Principal of the College. We are excited about continuing our stewardship of the College with Mary, the College Leadership Team and all the staff in delivering a well-rounded Presentation inspired education to your daughters.

One of the key responsibilities of the Board of Directors is to ensure the strategic growth and financial sustainability of a Star education. This includes setting the budget and determining the most appropriate and equitable fee structure for parents, students and families.

You will no doubt be aware from media reports, of the changes made this year by the federal government to the funding of the Catholic education sector. Star of the Sea will be impacted by those changes. The Catholic funding authority, CECV, receives federal funding in a block, and determines allocation of that funding. CECV have advised that as a result of the new funding formula, there will be a reduction in the amount of federal grants received by Star, effective from the 2018 school year. This has a clear impact on schools currently setting budgets and fees for 2018.

Further, Star may also be impacted by, an intended Government review of the Socio Economic Status (SES) categorisation. The SES is a formula that links school funding, to student residential addresses. Star's SES is somewhat skewed by the location of our school and does not take account of the actual socio economic circumstances of our student population.

In light of the above, and after careful consideration of the educational and staffing needs for 2018, the Board has approved a 4.89% increase in fees for 2018. The board has chosen not pass on to families the full impact of the funding cuts. Careful forward planning by the Board has enabled us to absorb part of that cost.

There will also be some changes to the fees payment options in 2018.

Due to the high merchant charges historically absorbed by Star, from 2018, the College will no longer accept American Express Cards toward the payment of school fees. The College will continue to accept both MasterCard and Visa. Further, the College will no longer provide discounts for preferred methods of payment, with the exception of the discount for the payment of full fees in advance.

The College has also considered the impact of the MacBook program that is in place across all year levels. Following a review by the Star Technology Committee, looking into both educational and economic considerations for families, the MacBook program will be extended to four years duration for Year 7 students commencing in 2018 (i.e. one year longer than currently). The MacBook replacement program will then move to a BYOD model at Year 10 in 2019. More information on this program will be made available next year.

The Board is constantly looking for ways to improve the educational experience of your daughters. Maintenance items already on the agenda for urgent action are new toilets for the senior students and an upgrade of the senior classrooms. With Trasna complete, the Board is now looking forward, and is in the process of preparing the next master plan for Star.

Finally, the Board is delighted to announce the establishment of a Bursary Committee. While Star has always provided financial assistance to families in need, this process has now been formalised through a tax deductible Bursary and Scholarship fund. Scholarships will be awarded on a needs basis, to help students who would otherwise be unable to do so, have the opportunity to participate in and experience a Star education. We invite parents and the wider community to consider contributing to the fund, which is at the heart of the Presentation tradition of providing support and education for those most in need. For further information, please contact the Finance Office.

We look forward to continuing to offer your daughters an outstanding education, which enables them to be their best selves, in the richness of the Presentation tradition.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Kathleen Donnellon  
**Chairperson**  
Star of the Sea College Board