

ST. BERNARD PARISH

Cincinnati, Ohio

School Tuition and Fees - Financial Policy

INTRODUCTION

Through a shared sense of responsibility, past and present members of St. Bernard Parish have given generously of their prayers, ministry, and treasure. This support has enabled St. Bernard Parish School to provide a very high level of Catholic education for the children of our Parish. It is our desire to avoid tuition fee increases by continuing to move in the direction of embracing stewardship as "a way of life" through the sharing of our time, talents and treasure by all parishioners. When our minds and hearts are converted to acknowledging God as Creator and Owner of all, we then begin to return the gifts of our time, talent and treasure not because God or our Church needs them but because we feel an overwhelming need to show our love and gratitude to God. A benefit of living in such a way will be an increase in our gift of treasure through weekly parish support. Doing so will enable a future decrease rather than an increase in parish tuition; but obviously it requires that support of each one of us. Let us pray then for a true conversion on the part of our parish and for the success of St. Bernard Parish, including the School, especially for those making great sacrifices to keep Catholic education a priority in their lives.

St. Bernard parish has for many years provided an education subsidy to the vast majority of families with children in our school. This subsidy has been provided in the form of reduced tuition rates for active members of the parish. For the 2021-2022 school year, this subsidy will total about \$215,575.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 School year, the parish changed the way it subsidized tuition for active members of the parish to align it with our core values as Catholics and with best practices in place within our Archdiocese. As Catholics we believe that attendance at Sunday mass is most importantly an obligation to God, but also a clear indicator of active family participation in our Christ-centered parish community. Celebrating the Eucharist as a parish family is a central part of who we are as a people of God and vital to the proper formation of our school children in our faith.

In support of this mission, the Parish Tuition Grant that is awarded to each school family will be based on their attendance at Sunday Mass the preceding year. Mass attendance during the 2022 Calendar Year will determine one's eligibility for the 23-24 School Year.

A. PARISH TUITION GRANT:

Our Parish Tuition Grant (Parish Subsidy), which is provided to eligible Parish Families, is the difference between the cost of educating their child/children and the amount charged. The weekly Sunday Offerings, primarily from our Parishioners, are the main source of our parish subsidy that is received by eligible school families. **Families wishing to receive the parish tuition grant must be registered members of St. Bernard Parish (the first requirement), and, must also fulfill the following two additional requirements to be/become eligible:**

The 2nd requirement, to meet "Eligible Family" status, is to be a **regular worshipping member of the St. Bernard Parish community, with "regular worshipping" meaning more times than not (at least 30 Sundays per year)**. As a sign of the family's presence, an offertory envelope must be placed in the offertory basket each time the family attends Sunday Mass, even if the family is unable to contribute financially that particular week. If you utilize the electronic giving program, you are still required to place an envelope in the collection each Sunday you attend. Simply write "e gift" on the outside of the envelope. If you forget an envelope, there are envelopes provided in the pews for your use. Simply write your family name on the outside and drop it in the regular collection. Parents SHOULD NOT collect envelopes from other parents and submit them – evidence of this will result in the loss of eligibility for the Parish Tuition Grant. The envelopes themselves are insignificant, only serving as indicators of a family's presence at Sunday Mass. The truly important component is a family's presence – benefitting students in the graces received at Mass and in witnessing their parents participating in Sunday worship. If families have no intention of attending Sunday Mass with their children, we ask that this be honestly acknowledged and eligibility for the Parish Tuition Grant be openly forfeited.

The 3rd requirement of "Eligible Family" status is to **meet all registration and tuition payment deadlines**. If a deadline cannot be met by the family, the family must contact the appropriate Parish Staff Member to discuss and establish a new and reasonable payment plan, before any deadline is reached.

To be considered an "Eligible Family" of St. Bernard Parish, the family must fulfill all three requirements. If you are unable to fulfill eligible family status due to a temporary or permanent change in your family's situation, please contact the Business Manager at 353-4207 extension 3. Please see Section C, Tuition Assistance, if the situation relates to fulfilling your family's tuition payment schedule.

The family’s eligibility will be assessed during the registration process, and then following, on an as-needed basis. Families who have failed to meet parish eligibility requirements will be assessed the full cost of their child/ren’s education until eligibility requirements are met. If the family is deemed not eligible, but later, believes that they are again fulfilling the necessary requirements, the family must contact the Parish Business Manager, so that the family’s eligibility may be re-assessed.

All contacts with the parish offices concerning financial matters will be kept strictly confidential.

The Pastor, in consultation with the Business Manager and the Principal, makes final determination of family eligibility.

B. TUITION

The Pastor and the Finance Council, in consultation with the Principal and Business Manager, establish tuition for each school year.

For "Eligible Families", the parish tuition grant is the difference between the total cost of educating the child/ren and the amount of tuition charged. This difference is provided by the Parish from our Parishioner’s Offertory Giving, for the most part. **“Non-Eligible Families” will be assessed the full cost of the School child/ren's education without benefit of the parish school tuition grant.** Please contact the Pastor or Business Manager at 353-4207 if you have any concerns.

C. TUITION ASSISTANCE

St. Bernard Parish believes that all Parish children should have access to a Catholic school education. Therefore, in order to qualify for Tuition Assistance, the family must be an eligible family of St. Bernard Parish, and meet all three requirements as defined in Section A.

St. Bernard uses FACTS Management to award financial aid and track tuition payments. Regardless of a family’s financial status or preferred method of payment, **ALL families will be required to register online through the FACTS Management website each year.** All families will receive a link to this website and directions for establishing their accounts in a future email. **In addition to the St. Bernard Tuition Assistance (through FACTS), parents applying for tuition assistance must also apply through the Archdiocesan tuition assistance program (Catholic Education Foundation – catholicbestchoice.org).**

Please note that all personal and financial information as well as requests for financial assistance will continue to be handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.

Tuition assistance only applies to the current school year or period for which it is written – annual application is required. Your account with FACTS will reflect any Tuition Assistance that was awarded.

If the family’s financial circumstances change during the current school year, which creates a hardship for the family to pay tuition, parents are responsible for contacting the Parish Business Manager. The Parents and the Business Manager work together to identify a reasonable payment plan, which may include Hardship Tuition Assistance.

D. CLOSING STATEMENT

The St. Bernard Parish School Financial Policy stated herein is presented as a matter of information only. St. Bernard Parish has made every effort to make this financial policy as comprehensive as possible, however, there is no written policy that can anticipate and cover all situations. While we believe whole-heartedly in the policies and procedures stated herein, the Pastor, in consultation with our Finance Council, reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, change, or make new any or all such plans, policies, or procedures, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice.

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Please complete and return the next page with your school registration forms.

