



August 9, 2018

The Catholic Schools Office (Diocese of Armidale) has set aside a \$200,000 Drought School Fee Relief Fund to support schools needing to offer fee relief to parents affected directly and indirectly by the drought in our school communities. School principals will communicate to parents that they can seek school fee relief for 2018 and 2019 following a meeting with the principal or school bursar. Schools will also subsidise students who need support to participate in excursions, retreats and sporting activities.

We hope this initiative will assist parents with little or no income who are struggling with ever increasing costs due to the drought. The Catholic Schools Office recognises the plight of not only farmers but all of those who are drought affected - including agriculture-related businesses. The next challenge is finding discrete ways for people in need to access the support as they need. Schools will be working with Catholic Church agencies such as Centacare and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) to assist families facing difficulty in the community.

School principals and Parish Priests are also conscious of the need to support the morale and mental health of students and their families who are impacted by the drought. Parents should not hesitate to call the schools if they are concerned about their children.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the community impacted by the drought, and we encourage parents in all our school communities to seek assistance in support of their children's Catholic education.

Yours in Christ

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale

Chris Smyth
Director of Schools