



Funding Columba

FAQs about school fees and donations

1. What funding does Columba College receive?

Columba College is classified as a 'state integrated area school'. Established in 1915 as a private school, in 1994 Columba became integrated under the terms of the Private Schools Integration Act. The school remains privately owned by the Board of Governors (the Proprietor), with teaching and learning operations governed by its Board of Trustees. People choose Columba for the educational experience and the special character and tradition offered by the College.

As a state integrated school Columba's Board of Governors is entitled to charge parents compulsory Attendance Dues, the level of which is approved by the Ministry of Education, to fund the capital cost of maintaining the College land and buildings. The use of these dues are audited by the Ministry of Education and must be used for the purpose for which they were gathered.

The College is a decile 10 school with a roll cap, which determines the amount of funding the Ministry of Education will provide to the Board of Trustees for the school's operations and staffing. As for all schools, this state funding is very stretched and there are many features of the Columba offering that are not able to be covered by the Ministry funding.

For both the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees to deliver the education experience for students in Years 0 - 13 that is expected by Columba's community, further funding sources are required. Much of this comes from parent donations that contribute directly to each child's Columba education and Columba families have always been very generous with their donations. Significant funds are also generated by the College's international student programme. Fundraising carried out by the Parents' Association and Sports Council contributes to many valued projects in the school, such as improved wifi across the campus and free fitness programmes for all Year 7 - 13 students. Other groups fundraise specifically for their own resources, such as individual sports teams and school groups.

2. What is the difference between the old system and the new annual voluntary contribution?

Ministry of Education guidelines are quite clear on what parents can be charged for and what must be stated as an optional donation. This new system brings Columba's practice into line with what is acceptable to the Ministry. Some of the items previously requested for donations are no longer required, such as the software fee, so have been removed. Some donations were requested monthly, some by term; parents told us this was not a simple and clear system so we have responded with one regular donation figure to capture everything that is required. This may be paid in monthly installments or as one lump sum.

The AVC income allows greater flexibility in staffing and subject choices which benefits all students.

To claim a tax credit you need to file a Tax Credit claim form (IR526) for the relevant tax year with Inland Revenue

3. What is compulsory and what is optional?

Attendance dues are a compulsory charge that are a condition of enrolment, and non-payment can result in debt recovery being initiated.

Curriculum related incidentals such as school stationery, workbooks, class camps and field trips, swimming lessons and other outside tuition, visiting speakers and performances and so on are all optional. When information about these activities or requirements is sent home you have the opportunity to choose not to pay and for your child to take part in an alternative activity. For example, you may prefer not to purchase a recommended write-on homework book, and for your child to have worksheets provided by the teacher. You might not wish for your child to attend a field trip to gather assessment material, but prefer that she remains at school and gathers the material in the library.

Optional activities that your child chooses to participate in, such as sports, performances, music lessons and exchanges may incur charges for subs, equipment, uniforms, transport, and the cost of accompanying teachers. Joining such activities is optional, but paying the expenses associated with them is not. Often outside providers are engaged to provide these activities. In each case the charges should be reasonable and transparent to parents.

The annual voluntary contribution (AVC) and annual Parents' Association donation are optional and can be removed from accounts by informing the Accounts Office that you wish to do so.

4. What does my AVC pay for that is not covered by state funding or user pays?

The donation allows Columba College to operate the following, for example:

- sports administration salaries, arts coordinator, itinerant music tutors, junior orchestra tutor
- student leadership activities (conferences, seminars, camps for leaders)
- extensive prizes and awards in sport, the arts, service and academics
- the chaplain, and special services and functions
- mini vans
- specialist teachers and external expertise to enhance the curriculum
- visiting speakers and performers

These activities apply to students in Years 0 – 13 equally.

5. Will my AVC be diverted to the proposed building projects?

No. The boarding building project will be paid for from an entirely separate funding stream and will not affect the College's business as usual budget. The primary school development will be funded mostly by attendance dues.

As a Year 0 – 13 school with a boarding house on campus, both the primary boys and girls and the boarders are considered integral elements of the special character of the College and their place in the school benefits all students.

6. Are there plans for smaller class sizes due to the AVC?

Columba's class sizes averaged across Years 0 – 13 are considerably smaller than many state schools. The new entrant and early years classes are below 15 children, and there are specialist senior classes (such as languages and music) that are allowed to run with small numbers in order to provide curriculum options for as many senior students as possible. Most secondary classes are at 23 – 27 students.

This is only possible through operating higher staffing levels than those funded by the Ministry of Education. The Board of Trustees' additional staffing resourcing is its greatest expense and can only be funded through donations. Staff numbers and curriculum options are reduced when there is not the income to sustain them. The AVC income allows greater flexibility in staffing and subject choices which benefits all students.

How is Columba funded?

Attendance Dues

This is a compulsory parent fee and is paid to the Board of Governors (the Proprietor)

Funds the capital costs associated with the privately owned land and buildings, and repaying debt incurred by providing land and buildings to the school.

Other

- Curriculum activities & resources – recommended but not compulsory (ie; swimming lessons, write-on homework books, stationery, camps, field trips)
- Selected activities – optional to join but expenses are compulsory (ie; sports subs, performance costs, music lessons)

Fundraising and International Tuition

These are mostly optional funds raised by the school to support students and operations

This includes: income from international students; support from fundraising by the Parents' Association and Sports Council; and funds raised by other fundraising projects such as the Entertainment Book, secondhand uniform sales, subsidies, sponsorship, bequests.

- Funds extra teaching resource
- Funds special projects ie; technology, science equipment

**Parents' Association donation is tax deductible*

Annual voluntary contributions

These are optional contributions from parents and are tax deductible

- specialist teachers and external expertise to enhance the curriculum
- the chaplain, and special services and functions
- sports administration salaries, arts coordinator, itinerant music tutors, junior orchestra
- student leadership activities (conferences, seminars, camps)
- extensive prizes and awards in sport, the arts, service and academics
- mini vans
- visiting speakers and performers

Operational funding from the Ministry of Education

These funds are paid to the Board of Trustees or Board of Governors and are defined by the school's decile rating.

Capped or targeted amounts for:

- furniture & equipment, property works
- heat and light
- major maintenance

Discretionary operations funding for:

- teaching resources
- grounds & maintenance
- support & admin staff
- special needs/extension staff
- sport & arts
- office administration

** There is separate capped funding for teacher salaries*

