



# Parent Payment Policy

## For Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions

### Rationale:

Our School Council is responsible for developing a school-level policy which covers essential student learning items, optional items and voluntary financial contributions. This school-level policy aims to meet the community's expectations and be available to parents and carers upon request.

### Aims:

To assist in providing a financially well managed school that maximises financial opportunities and makes decisions that are based on the best educational interests of the students.

### Parent Payment Charges\*:

#### Essential Student Learning Items:

These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning in the standard curriculum. Examples are items such as student stationery, book bags and activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend, such as costs associated with excursions.

#### Optional Items:

These are items or services that are **optional** and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum. Students may access these on a user pays basis. These items include instrumental music tuition; fees for guest speakers; optional camps and excursions; entry fees to school-based performances, productions and events.

#### Voluntary Financial Contributions:

Parents, or anyone else, can be invited to make a **voluntary** contribution or donation to the school for the following purposes:

- contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers or student-related services. These contributions are NOT tax deductible.
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school. These contributions or donations are NOT tax deductible.
- donations to a building fund or library fund (if these funds have been endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office and have a Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) status). Donations to these funds ARE tax deductible to the donor.

\*Please see Understanding Parent Payment Categories Appendix A.

### Implementation:

School Council will appoint a "Finance" sub-committee as described by the School Council Standing Orders which will meet prior to each School Council meeting and report on issues and present recommendations relating to all relevant financial matters at each council meeting.

This sub-committee will be responsible for advising School Council on all matters associated with locally raised funds and where appropriate centrally raised funds including the levels of voluntary contributions, essential education items, optional extras and management of CSEF payments.

This sub-committee through its budgetary processes will take responsibility for developing each year's program of Parent Payments, ensuring DET guidelines and requirements are met.

All revenue and expenditure budgets within the Parent Payments program will be based on the CASES chart of accounts, and the school will use CASES Accounts Receivable and Payable modules to record all relevant transactions.

The school-level policy must keep parent payments to a minimum and must not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services provided to the student.

The sub-committee will be responsible for preparing annual financial statement and records for auditing, as well as provide to School Council with annual receipt, expenditure and investment statements for public annual reports, including information on the Parent Payment program.

Parent and Carers are required to pay for essential items and activities such as costs associated with camps, excursions which all students are expected to attend.

Payments for term cost activities such as excursions, camps and incursions must be received at least 3 days prior to the day of the event.

If payment is not received by the required due date, the student will not attend or participate and an alternative activity will be provided.

Parents and carers experiencing financial difficulties and are unable to make a payment by the due date must contact the school to speak with the Principal by phone, email or in person.

The school will ensure a range of options and measures are in place to ensure parents/carers experiencing hardship can be supported. This includes options to pay in instalments via a payment plan, access the Camps Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF), State School Relief and other local community supports.

Consideration will also be given to ensure proactive strategies are in place to engage with parents disconnected from the school who may be experiencing hardship, such as discretely approaching families who may need support and special payment arrangements.

This policy will be available on request and will also be displayed on the school website.

Parents wishing to raise any issues or make general inquiries about charges can contact the Principal by phone, email or in person.

Further information and support for school and school councils regarding the implementation of this policy is available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.asp>

## Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

This policy was ratified by School Council - September 2016

# Understanding Parent Payment Categories

## Schools

### What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

### What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

### What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability  
 Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

## Parents

### What may parents be asked to pay for?

#### Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems essential to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
- textbooks, activity books, exercise books
  - stationery, book bags
  - student ID cards, locks
  - cooking ingredients students will consume
  - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
  - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
- excursions
  - incursions
  - school sports
  - work placements



Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

#### Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are optional and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
- school magazines, class photos
  - functions, formals, graduation dinners
  - materials for extra curricular programs
  - student accident insurance

Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
- fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
  - fees for guest speakers
  - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
  - entry fees for school run performances



Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
- use of silver in metal work instead of copper
  - supplementary exam revision guides

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person.

See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Schools can invite Voluntary Financial Contributions for



- e.g.
- Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
  - Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
  - General voluntary contributions