



Parent Payment Policy

Purpose

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

Rationale

The Victorian community shares a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Schools are best placed to make local decisions which ensure that all students can access a broad range of learning opportunities that support their expectations and promote their aspirations as they move through the education system. Parent contribution, in all forms, assists schools to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by school communities.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources.

Parent Payment Charges

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in government schools. School council is responsible for developing and approving school-level parent payment charges and can request payments from parents under three categories only- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Essential Student Learning Items are those items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of. Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.

Optional Items are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them.

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

Payment arrangements and methods

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

Costs will be kept to a minimum with payment requests/letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

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| Option A | Full amount at the beginning of Term 1 |
| Option B | Payment at the beginning of each Term |
| Option C | Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3) |
| Option D | Other payment arrangements |

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional extras will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

Family support options

A range of support options are available for parents experiencing difficulty in paying for essential student learning items. An outline of the support options available includes:

- access to State Schools' Relief support via the Principal to assist with uniforms & shoes
- the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, which is available for eligible families, to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities
- second hand and low cost options e.g. school uniform

Consideration of hardship

Parents who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential student learning items will be supported and should make an appointment with the Principal or Business Manager to discuss alternative payment methods. Every effort will be made to support students and parents experiencing difficulty with payments.

Communication with families

School council will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

This policy will be reviewed every three years and ratified annually as part of the school's policy review cycle.

This policy was ratified by School Council at the meeting held :

PRINCIPAL:-

PRESIDENT: