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PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Rationale

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* provides for the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program, and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and to raise funds. As the quality and variety of educational programs offered by our school are enhanced by doing so, our School Council requests payment from parents for certain student materials and services charges, and for modest voluntary financial contributions.

Aims

To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.

Implementation

- School Council supplements Department of Education funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items :-
 1. **Essential Student Learning Items** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. material costs, text books – reference materials, student planner).
 2. **Optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. school camps, excursions and activities etc).
 3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school.
- Families will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by December of the previous year.
- Parent Payment and Voluntary Contribution statements will be sent out once per term with the option of paying by instalment.
- The Parent Payment will consist entirely of Essential Student Learning items that the school has purchased in bulk. These items include: exercise books, colour pencils, pencils/pens, textas, glue/paste, display books, erasers, rulers, scissors, sharpeners, folders, folder refills, plain and ruled paper, construction materials, cover paper, art paper etc. Parents may request a list of required items and purchase these themselves. All items would need to be brought to school on the first day the student attends.
- Eligible families will be given the opportunity to apply for the Camps, Sports and Excursions (CSEF) fund which will cover some of the costs associated with relevant camps, sports and excursions for that family.
- All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where parents have or have not been received will not occur.
- All costs and processes associated with parent payments and voluntary contributions will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to DET requirements, and will be within the expectation of the school community.
- The School will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal or Business Manager.
- Unpaid **Essential Items** payments will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family. Unpaid **Optional Extras** payments may compromise a student's ability to be involved in an optional activity in the future. Unpaid **Voluntary Financial Contributions** do not constitute a non-payment and will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family.
- No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents or students.
- The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to it.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle. School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from DEECD

Approved by School Council – May 2019

To be reviewed – May 2020

Signed: _____
Ian Denson, Principal

Date: _____

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

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