



PARENT PAYMENTS

Policy

AIM:

This policy is to support the process for collection of parent payments to facilitate quality learning for students. It also aims to ensure fair and equitable resources for use within the School and to create a clear and precise process working in partnership with parents/guardians to support the best learning environment for students.

GUIDELINES:

1. To provide parents and guardians with reasonable notice of requests for payment of booklists, material charges and voluntary contributions are now divided under the headings essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks notice will be given to allow parents and guardians sufficient planning time to meet financial commitments. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the school year in which the materials and services are to be used.
2. Enrolment will not be withheld or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions. All information will be kept confidential.
3. Booklists are presented to School Council annually for approval
4. This school-level policy will ensure that all communication with parents about education items, including requests for payment, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES 21 invoices for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following information:
 - Parent/Guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and they have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate.
 - If parents/guardians require assistance with payments they should write to the Principal who will respond with alternative payment options.
 - Details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school.
 - A copy of the school-level policy is available upon request.
5. Essential education items are those items used in the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

These items include:

- Materials that the individual student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery.
 - Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finalised articles (e.g. home economics, ceramics, photography, catering),
 - School uniform
 - Essential services associated with, but not considered to be a part of, instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).
6. Optional extras (or non-essential materials and services) are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are provided on a **user-pay basis** and if parents and guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- Instructional support material, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program (e.g. student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use, and religious education materials)

- Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music tuition)
 - Materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable (e.g. the use of more expensive materials).
 - Materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. school magazines)
 - School facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the SRP (e.g. student accident insurance and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).
7. School Councils may invite parents and guardians of a student enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:
- Contributions to a building and grounds beautification trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund (these trust funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax deductible).
 - 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.
 - General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.
8. The School will make support options available for parents who have difficulty paying for essential items and who can access a range of support options which will include:
- **The School Start Bonus**
 - **State Schools Relief Committee.**
 - **Staged progress payments/payment plans**
9. Students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions.
10. All students have access to the standard curriculum program.
11. Invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month
12. Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents and guardians
13. Under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

Ref: S381-2007 Parent Payments and Voluntary Financial Contributions in Victorian Government Schools

This policy was ratified at School Council on

February 2015