

## Parent Payment Policy

### Rationale:

The Education & Training Reform Act 2006 empowers school councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children, as well as 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. The costs associated with the core learning and teaching activities of the Victorian Curriculum or administration and coordination of the 'standard curriculum program' are considered to be part of free instruction and will not be passed on to parents or guardians.

### Aim:

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

### Guidelines:

School Council supplements Department of Education and Training funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items:-

#### **1. Essential Education Items**

Parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide:

- Items which students take possession of, including text books and student stationery
- Materials for learning and teaching where students consume or take possession of the finished articles
- Parents have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If parents choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, and should meet the specifications provided by the school.

#### **2. Optional Extras**

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 you choose to access them for your child you will be required to pay for them. These items include:

- Instructional supports, resources and administration beyond the provision of the 'standard curriculum program' (for example, student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use, and religious educational materials)
- Services associated with, but not considered to be part of, 'instruction' in the 'standard curriculum program', such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are encouraged to attend
- Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the 'standard curriculum program' (for example, instrumental music tuition)
- Entry fees for school run performances, productions and events
- Materials and services offered in addition to the 'standard curriculum program' (for example, school magazine or school photographs).

### **3. Voluntary Financial Contributions**

Non-compulsory donations for specific areas of support or projects (for example, school grounds projects, library funds or new equipment).

When requesting voluntary contributions, the school will apply the following principles:

- Contributions are to be voluntary and obtained without coercion or harassment.
- School councils must clearly articulate how the funds will be spent
- A student is not to be refused instruction in the 'standard curriculum program' because the students parent's/guardians do not make a contribution
- Students are not to be approached or harassed for contributions.
- Any record of contributions should be confidential

#### **Implementation:**

- Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by December of the previous year, along with a recommended payments schedule.
- The payments schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate), essential payment dates, options to make payments by instalments, clear definitions of the category of any payments (i.e. Essential, Optional or Voluntary and advice to parents to contact the principal if they require support or additional information.
- All payments and non-payments will be handled with confidentiality and sensitivity.
- All costs and processes associated with parent payments and voluntary contributions will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to Department of Education and Training requirements and will be within the expectations of the school community.
- As with all parent payments to the school, Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the principal.
- Statements for unpaid Parent Payments will be sent each term, with the exception of requests for Voluntary Financial Contributions which will be limited to one reminder notice per year.
- Students will not be denied access to the 'standard curriculum program' or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions.
- Unpaid Optional Extras payments may compromise a student's ability to be involved in the 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 is responsible for the implementation and administration of this policy including ensuring that the policy is communicated within the school community.

- A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who holds an eligible Centrelink/ Health Care Card or pension card, may be entitled to the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF). Applications forms available at the school office.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on: 13th March 2019