Parent Payment
POLICY

Rationale
School Council’s are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in three categories – essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

Definition

*Essential Education Items* are items which parents/guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child. These items are essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program and include:

- materials that the individual student takes possession of, such as text books and student stationary;
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. home economics, art);
- school uniform (where applicable); and
- activities associated with, but not 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).

*Optional Extras* are items provided in addition to the standard curriculum program and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them. These items include:

- instructional support material, resources and administration in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. student computer printing for personal use);
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music);
- school-based performances, productions and events;
- 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); and
- school facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the Student Resource Package (SRP) (e.g. student accident insurance, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).

*Voluntary Financial Contributions* are items which parents/guardians, or anyone else, may be invited to make a donation to the school for the following purposes:

- contributions to a building 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; and

• general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Aim

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

Implementation

• Requests for payments and contributions will be kept to a minimum and the school will attempt at all times to provide parents and guardians with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

• A range of support options are available to assist parents in meeting requests for payments and contributions, including the Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) and State Schools Relief Committee support.

• The Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) is funded by the Victorian Government and provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student. More information about the CSEF is available at: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx.

• Any portion of CSEF not expended by the end of the year will be carried over into the next year.

• If a student leaves the school, any portion of CSEF not expended will be forwarded onto the student’s new school.

• Parents and guardians who are experiencing financial difficulties are welcome to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal that suits both the parents and the school.

• Receipts will be issued to parents and guardians as soon as possible after a payment has been made.

• No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

• All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where payments have or have not been received will not occur.

• No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents, guardians or students.

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

• After the initial invitation for payment of a voluntary financial contribution only one reminder notice per year will be sent to parents/guardians.

References

• School Policy & Advisory Guide

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years or as deemed necessary.