



Parent Payment Policy

Purpose:

School Councils are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in the three categories:

- essential education items;
- optional education items; and
- voluntary financial contributions.

All administrative and financial processes are compliant with Department of Education and Training (DET) requirements, including CASES21 financial reporting.

Aims:

- To provide a broad range of high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.
- To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

Definition

'Parent' in this policy has the same meaning as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

Parent Payment Categories

There are three categories of parent payments.

1. Essential education items

Are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide. These items can include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery;
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. home economics, ceramics, photography, catering);
- school uniform; and/or
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

2. Optional education items

These can also be referred to as non-essential materials and services. These items 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-pays basis and if parents choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for each item.

These items can include:

- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes;
- school-based performances, productions and events;
- excursions and incursions; and/or
- additional school items such as student/ class photographs.

3. Voluntary financial contributions

Are those items and services under which parents are invited to make a donation to the School, for example for grounds maintenance, library resources or technologies equipment.

4. Requests for Payment

- Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the academic year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- Payment requests or letters 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.
- Upon making payment, receipts will be issued to parents within 5 school days.

- Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items 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 to parents and guardians.

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

Payment Support Options

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist parents, including:

- The **Camps, Sports and Excursion fund (CSEF)** supports families who met eligibility criteria set by the Victorian Government to ensure the student has the opportunity to participate in important, educational and fun activities.
- The **State Schools Relief Committee** support, applications can be made via the Principal to assist with clothing/uniforms

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

Implementation:

Student Requisites

Bonbeach Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our students. Student requisites contain high quality materials at a competitive price due to our ability to bulk order.

Parents also 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, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

Uniforms

- The uniform shop sources low cost suppliers to ensure the uniform is financially accessible.
- In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the School Council authorises the operation of a second-hand school uniform shop.
- The Dress Code sets out the colours of the uniform items students are required to wear. Low cost generic uniforms with no school logo from suppliers such as Kmart, Target and Big W are acceptable as school uniform if the requirements of the Dress Code are met.

Payment arrangements and methods

Parents will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year).

Payments may be made by cash, cheque or EFTPOS in person or via student at the office.

Direct deposit to the school (**Student name and Description must be provided**).

Payment Options

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, two payment options are available:

- Option A** - Full amount payment.
- Option B** - Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss circumstances and available options.

Consideration of hardship

The school will provide support to parents experiencing hardship, including:

- parents can communicate with by phone, email, in writing or in person about their financial situation and related difficulties in making payments to the Principal who is the nominated parent payment contact person;
- parents/guardians who experience difficulties providing, or paying the school to provide, essential education items, should be encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss alternative payment methods; and
- early payment incentives, one off payments and payment plans. All payment plans must be finalised by the end of term 3.

Communication with families

- This policy will be communicated to the school community annually when the booklists are sent out.
- The policy will also be prominently located on the school website.
- The Principal is available for parents to discuss any issues, make general inquiries about charges and raise complaints.

Monitoring and review of the implementation of the policy

- It is the responsibility of the School Council to monitor the implementation of the policy.
- The factors/measures to be taken into account include transparency of processes and engagement with parents.
- The outcomes of any review of this policy will be reported back to the school community via the school website and newsletter.

Evaluation:

This policy is required to be reviewed annually by School Council to confirm/enhance internal control procedures.

Approved by School Council on: 9 August 2016