

Parent Payment Policy

Rationale	A school-level parent payment policy is a requirement of the Department of Education. This policy will cover essential education items, optional extras and voluntary contributions and must comply with the requirements of the Department of Education policy.
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Aim	This policy aims to meet the community's expectations and will ensure that parent payments are kept to a minimum and must not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.
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Implementation	Principals are responsible for the implementation and administration of the parent payment policy developed by the school council. This includes ensuring that the school-level policy is communicated within the school and that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.
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The policy on essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions should ensure that:

- Parents and guardians are provided with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year should be given to allow parents and guardians sufficient planning time. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
 - Items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed.
 - Administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES21 financial reporting.
 - The school does not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions.
 - The status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are confidential.
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Essential Education Items	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.
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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 finished articles (e.g. home economics, ceramics, photography, catering).
 - School uniform (where applicable).
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- 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).
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Optional Extras

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-pays 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).
 - Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music, Pathways, VCAL, VET etc).
 - 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).
 - School facilities and equipment not associated with the 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).
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Voluntary Financial Contributions

School councils may invite parents and guardians of students 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 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 (School Resource Package). This may include additional computers or student-related services.
 - General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.
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Support Options

Parents who have difficulty paying for essential items may have access to a range of support options including:

- The **School Start Bonus** which was introduced by the Victorian Government in 2006 to assist parents and guardians of Prep and Year 7 students in meeting the start-up costs of sending their child to school. This initiative provides financial assistance to families for expenditure on school and sporting uniforms, school bags, books and related expenses.
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- Access to **State Schools Relief Committee** support via the Student Wellbeing Coordinator to assist with clothing/uniforms.
 - Welfare and support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families.

The college will exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of individual students and their families. We are encouraged to make decisions about how to manage non-payment of essential education items or optional extras on a case-by-case basis.

Where families have difficulty making payments, the Business Manager and Student Wellbeing Coordinator are expected to discuss the range of support options available, and to negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement, such as payment by instalments.

The college will endeavour to make quality second-hand books and uniforms available to parents in need.

Parents and guardians who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential education items, should be encouraged to make an appointment with the principal or other nominated senior staff member to discuss alternative payment methods.

Payment Arrangements and Non-Payment

The College will ensure that:

- Students are not 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.
- All students have access to the standard curriculum program.
- Parents and guardians are provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp.
- 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.
- Administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES21 financial reporting.
- Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon payment.
- Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents and guardians.
- Under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

The College will ensure any record of payments or contributions by parents and guardians is kept confidential. The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is unacceptable and must not occur in any circumstance.

Extra-curricular Events

All elective charges (VET, VCAL, Pathways, Community, VCD, Studio Art etc) must be **paid in full prior** to participating in extra-curricular events such as Camps, Year 10 Formal, Valedictory, Varsity Jackets, End of Year Activity etc.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Finance subcommittee every 2 years.

Ratified

This policy was ratified by School Council 24/05/16.
