

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Rationale

- The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program, and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and 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.

Goals

- To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.
- To provide information for the school community regarding parent payments at Bolwarra Primary School. This policy covers payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions that our school requests and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests will be made. This policy complies with the requirements of the Department of Education and Training (DET) Parent Payments Policy.

Parent Payment Categories

- School Council requests payments from parents, within the DET guidelines, for the following three categories:

Essential education items

- These are items which parents are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child.
- These items include:
 - Student requisites required to be used by students. Supplies are purchased in bulk for each child and are specific to their year level. The school organises for bulk purchase of these items at the beginning of each year.
 - Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finalised articles. This incorporates supplies and resources for all key learning areas, including specialist areas such as Art, Library and LOTE. These items are purchased at competitive rates by the school through bulk orders.
 - Transport and entrance for excursions and incursions which all students are expected to attend. These activities support the curriculum at each year level. (e.g. Life Education Van)
 - ICT subscriptions that students access on a regular basis as part of their normal curriculum (e.g. Reading Eggs and Mathletics)

Optional extras

- These are programs that are offered on a user-pays basis which parents may choose to access for their child/ren.

- These items include:
 - Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music tuition)
 - 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

Voluntary financial contributions

- These are contributions which parents may be **invited** to donate to the school. Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:
 - 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
 - Buildings and Grounds development and maintenance
 - General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Implementation

- The Principal is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Parent Payment Policy developed and approved by School Council.

This policy ensures that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment requests are broadly itemised within the appropriate category
- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent Essential Student Learning Items themselves, in consultation with the school
- information on payment options is available, accessible and easily understood to all parents so that they know what to expect and what supports they can access
- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.
- parents are provided with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year- ensuring parents have a clear understanding of the full financial contribution being sought
- the status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel
- parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next
- use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted
- there will be only one reminder notice to parents for voluntary financial contributions per year
- Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

School Council will ensure that:

- The Parent Payments policy is reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle
- The Parent Payments Schedule is reviewed and endorsed annually, however no later than the end of October of the year preceding the year of the required payments
- Parent Payments are kept to a minimum and will not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring that:

- Essential education items are provided for their child/ren. If parents/guardians choose to provide items themselves, 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
- The Principal, or delegate, is contacted to discuss alternative payment options if required.

Resources

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Policy available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually to confirm/enhance internal controls. School Council will also review the level and purpose of Parent Payments and Voluntary Contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

November 2019