

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

RATIONALE

The Victorian community shares a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Schools are best placed to make local decisions which ensure that all students can access a broad range of learning opportunities that support their expectations and promote their aspirations as they move through the education system. Parent contribution, in all forms, assists schools to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by school communities.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources. This, in turn, informs the parent voluntary contributions requested, approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

CAN SCHOOLS ASK FOR A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION?

FREE INSTRUCTION

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in government schools. School councils are responsible for developing and approving school-level parent voluntary contributions payment requests under three categories only- Curriculum Contributions, Other Contributions and Extra-Curricular Items and Activities. See the Parent Payments Policy One Page Overview below for more information on each of these categories.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

PRINCIPLES

- **Educational value:** Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent contributions practices
- **Access, equity and inclusion:** All students have access to the standard curriculum program and participation of all students to the full school program is facilitated
- **Affordability:** Cost to parents is kept to a minimum and is affordable for most families at the school
- **Engagement and Support:** Early identification and engagement strategies by the school ensure parents are well informed of the contribution options and supports available for those experiencing hardship
- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgment and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent contributions
- **Transparency and Accountability:** School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils

COST AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS

When school councils consider the proposed requests for parent contributions, the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school.

School principals must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment contribution requests are broadly itemised within the appropriate category
- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent classroom consumables, in consultation with the school

- information on contribution 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 contribution payment requests (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 contribution 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
- 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 extracurricular items and activities accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

In respect to each school's development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

REVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Schools will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

VOLUNTARY CURRICULUM CONTRIBUTIONS

Coral Park Primary School Council will annually review parent voluntary curriculum contributions to ensure they are in line with Department of Education & Training guidelines. Contribution requests will be clearly itemized, costed and categorized as Curriculum Contributions, Other Contributions and Extra-Curricular Items and Activities.

Parent contribution requests will be made in line with the principles of Educational value; Access, equity and inclusion; Affordability; Engagement and Support; Respect and Confidentiality; Transparency and Accountability

Parent contributions will be requested to assist the school in providing an enhanced teaching and learning program for every student in line with the School priorities.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Parents will be provided with early notification of annual voluntary curriculum contributions (a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the end of the previous school year). Reasonable notice will be given for any other payment requests during the year (i.e. extracurricular items and activities).

Parents can make voluntary payments via, cash, cheque, direct deposit and EFTPOS.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

There are a number of support options available for parents including but not limited to;

- Second hand uniform (available from the MPC every second Friday).
- Camps, Sports & Excursion Funding (CSEF) available to eligible parents
- Local community supports (Wellbeing team can provide further information)
- Some items may be provided from other sources in consultation with the school.

Information regarding support options is available from the general office and will be advertised periodically in the School Newsletter and on the website.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The Parent Payment Policy will be published on the School website. It will also be distributed to families each year along with the annual payment request.

General enquiries regarding parent contributions may be made to the School office on 9702 8398. Concerns should be directed in the first instance to the Business Manager.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The School Council (via the Finance Committee) will conduct an annual review of the implementation of the Parent Payment Policy including addressing any concerns raised by the School community. Any changes to the Policy Implementation will be reported back to the community via notice on the School website and report in the School Newsletter.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually and ratified at the beginning of each new school year as part of the School's ongoing review cycle.

REVIEW

This policy was reviewed in November 2021 and is due for review in November 2022.

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW



FREE INSTRUCTION

- Schools provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
- Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.



PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions	Other Contributions	Extra-Curricular Items and Activities
Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.	Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.	Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

- Schools may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices).



FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES

- Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn't miss out.
- Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.



SCHOOL PROCESSES

- Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.