



Policy Location	Policies/Finance		
Policy Title	Parent Payment Policy		
Date approved	21 Feb 2017	Review Date:	Feb 2018
Revision No:		Revision Date:	

Purpose

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in Victorian government schools. Schools however are able to request payments to enhance and enrich the learning and teaching program for students. School councils are responsible for developing and approving a school-level parent payment policy that is compliant with the Department's policy.

This policy covers the three categories Reservoir High may request payment for, and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

Policy Statement

The school council can request payments from parents/ guardians under the following three categories:

- 1. Essential Student Learning Items:** items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of (e.g. stationery and text books). Parents may choose to provide the items themselves, this should be in consultation with the school and items should meet the specifications provided by the school.
- 2. Optional Items:** items or services that are offered in addition to the standard curriculum. They are offered on a user-pays basis and if parents/ guardians choose to access them for their child they will be required to pay for them (e.g. extra-curricular programs, formals/ graduations).
- 3. Voluntary Financial Contributions:** the school may invite parents/ guardians to make donations for a specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, building/ library fund or general voluntary contributions. Not all donations are tax deductible.

The Principal must ensure that the school-level policy complies with the Department's policy. The Principal will also ensure that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.

Implementation

- In term 3 each year the Finance committee will consider the level of fees and charges and make a recommendation to school council.
- Parent payments will only be set under the categories of Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.
- The school will ensure that parent payments are kept to a minimum and do not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.
- Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by late November of the previous year, along with a recommended payments schedule.

- The payments schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, essential payment dates, clear definitions of the category of payment (i.e. essential, optional or voluntary).
- All communication with parents/ guardians regarding payment requests is fair and reasonable and invoices/ statement for unpaid essential or accepted optional items are not generated more than monthly.
- The schools Parent Payment policy will be available on the school website.
- Parents/ guardians will only be issued with the initial invitation and one reminder for voluntary financial contributions.
- General inquiries, questions or concerns can be directed to the Assistant Business Manager.
- Students are not to be denied access to the standard curriculum program, refused instruction or disadvantaged on the basis of payments not being made for education items or services.
- The school will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are strictly confidential.

Support Options

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

- State Schools Relief Committee – clothing & uniform support,
- Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) – provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports & excursions.
- Welfare support agencies
- School Wellbeing Coordinator

Parents/ guardians experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential student learning items will be supported and encouraged to contact the schools Assistant Business Manager, Kathy Jones on 9466 0900 to discuss in confidence alternate payment arrangements e.g. instalments.

Evaluation

School Council has the responsibility and will 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. Change to the policy will be advised in the school newsletter with updated policy available on the school web site.

References

This Policy was developed in accord with the following documents:

- DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools
- DET Parent Payment Policy and Implementation
- DET Parent Payment policy
- Understanding Parent Payment Categories
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Understanding Parent Payment Categories

Schools

What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability

Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

Parents

What may parents be asked to pay for?

Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
- textbooks, activity books, exercise books
 - stationery, book bags
 - student ID cards, locks
 - cooking ingredients students will consume
 - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
 - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
- excursions
 - incursions
 - school sports
 - work placements

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are **optional** and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
- school magazines, class photos
 - functions, formals, graduation dinners
 - materials for extra curricular programs
 - student accident insurance

Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
- fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
 - fees for guest speakers
 - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
 - entry fees for school run performances

Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
- use of silver in metal work instead of copper
 - supplementary exam revision guides

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: www.education.vic.gov.au

Schools can invite **Voluntary Financial Contributions** for



- e.g.
- Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
 - Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
 - General voluntary contributions