



Menzies Creek Primary School

Parent Payment and Voluntary Financial Contributions 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 payment charges approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

This policy will cover payments for Essential Education Items, Optional Education Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

School Councils can request payments from families for student materials and service charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:

- **Essential education items** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child. (eg. stationery, consumable materials, essential subjects student materials, Plot to Pot and ICT)
- **Optional education items** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and carers may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in. (eg. Extra curricula programs or activities, school-based performances or events)
- **Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school (eg. Ground's maintenance and safety, additional computers)

AIMS:

- Sufficient funds are raised through parent payments and voluntary contributions to enable the school to offer a high quality educational program.
- Students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for educational items, services or voluntary financial contribution.
- Parent/carer payments for essential education items and optional extras are kept to a minimum and do not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the students.

BROAD GUIDELINES:

This policy complies with the requirements of the DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Policy. The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department's [**School Policy and Advisory Guide.**](#)



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- It is important that this policy is communicated within the school and that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.
- A variety of extracurricular activities (eg. excursions) will be offered to complement the educational program and these will be provided on a user-pays basis.
- Where families have difficulty making payments, the principal will discuss the range of support options available and negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement.
- All communication with parents will be fair and reasonable and based on the spirit of the school's values.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- The school will provide parents and carers with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks' notice will be provided to allow sufficient planning time where possible.
- Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which materials and services will be used.
- Payment arrangements should coincide with the timing of the availability of support for eligible parents/carers.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments will remain confidential.
- Written payment requests will outline the option of either purchasing essential educational items from the school or through a local supplier, alternative payment options, details of spending intentions and how to access the school policy.
- Payment requests to parents/carers must clearly identify which category the items fall into. The three categories are outlined above.
- The school will only issue one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.
- Invoices for unpaid essential educational items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.
- Optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis, and if parents/carers choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES:

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. Principals and school councils exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents. These can be accessed through [**"Cost support for families."**](#)

Consideration to hardship arrangements in respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis. All schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty.

All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.



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RESOURCES:

School Policy and Advisory Guide.

“Cost support for families.”

EVALUATION:

Parental knowledge, understanding, support and feedback in relation to the contents of this policy.
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle.

Ratified: 2018

Date of Review: 2020