

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Wandong Primary School

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.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS CHARGE FOR?

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 payment charges and can request payments from parents¹ under three categories only- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Essential Student Learning Items are those 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. Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.

Optional Items are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them.

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

¹ Parent¹ in the policy has the same meaning as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

The attached diagram "Understanding Parent Payment Categories" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

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 payments 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 payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship
- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **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 payments 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 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.

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.

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.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department’s [School Policy and Advisory Guide.](#)

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see:
[Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

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

WPS – Parent Payment Policy

For period: October 2019 –October 2020

PURPOSE

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

RATIONALE

Wandong Primary is a school of choice and parents enrol their children into our school because our curriculum far exceeds a standard program. Our parents choose our school because of the diversity and quality of our teaching and learning.

School Council has agreed and ratified our Parent Payments of \$150 for 2020, for the purpose of meeting our educational objectives. When divided across the school year of 41 weeks- this is less than \$4.00 per week per student.

School Council has made a considerable effort to ensure that this school policy is fair and provides a number of options to support parents to access the materials and services associated with their child's education.

Please find the itemised list that includes essential education items (those items that your child needs for school).

Payment in full or your first preferred instalment payment is required by **February 1, 2020**.

Please Note: Additional school charges may arise during the year. These are **Optional Education Items**. For example: instrumental music, fundraising events, swimming, production tickets and special events.

Government funding is received for some school costs such as staff salaries, utilities and some maintenance costs. Various other grants are made available for specific purposes. **However, much of the operational costs including provision of computers (including laptops/ipads), high quality school resources, extra sports equipment, library/ICT equipment, quality art and science supplies and consumables, along with the provision of new initiatives are supported solely from local fundraising, including parent payments.** We strongly believe we are offering high quality education at a minimal cost to families. Parent payments lifts the quality of our programs significantly across the school.

Voluntary contributions		
Library and Technology Fund donation	Please tick the amount you wish to donate to the Library Fund to contribute to the new books, resources and technology required in our new library learning space.	\$ 20.00
		\$ 50.00
		\$100.00
		Other \$ _____
Facilities and Building Fund donation	Please tick the amount you wish to donate to the Facilities and Buildings at Wandong. We have some work to do in our grounds including but not limited to: soft fall, repairing equipment, improvement to paths/walk ways, painting, carpet, planting, and signage. We want our spaces inside and outside to match the exceptional teaching and learning across our school.	\$ 20.00
		\$ 50.00
		\$100.00
		Other \$ _____
Essential education items		
Essential education items	<p>This payment also contributes to all shared items and consumables, such as cover paper, art materials, poster paper, kinder squares, printing, art supplies, posters, publishing and creative materials, laminating materials, book marking materials, cooking supplies, experiment materials, shared text books and assorted stationary.</p> <p>All curriculum associated learning and assessment materials are covered. All class reading books and all literacy and numeracy and specialist subjects are included (Science and Technology, Physical Education, Arts and LOTE programs)</p>	\$150
Essential Education Items + Voluntary Contribution = YOUR ADJUSTED TOTAL		\$ _____

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Please indicate your preferred method of payment:

Option A (full amount By February 1, 2020)

Option B (payment at the beginning of each Term)

Option C (other payment arrangements)*

* (If selecting Option C please make an appointment with the school to discuss your circumstances and the available options)

I HAVE ENCLOSED PAYMENT OF

\$ _____



Regular Payments through Centrepay (via Centrelink). Forms available at the office.



Pay in Person at the School Office by Cash/cheque/EFTPOS Credit Card



633 000
157122797



Mail a Cheque with Payment details to:
Wandong Primary School
PO Box 402
Wandong 3758

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist eligible parents, including the State Schools Relief Committee support, Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

We understand you may not be able to pay this amount at the requested time so we can offer a confidential payment plan for you if you wish.

Alternative payment arrangements are also available through the school and if you are facing any financial difficulties please contact Ros Hulett (Business Manager) on 5787 1232, or alternatively contact wandong.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au if you would like to organise a confidential meeting.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year).

Receipts will be issued to parents once payments have been processed.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional extras will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

Please email wandong.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au if you wish to raise any concerns or have a general inquiry regarding the charges.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed each year as part of the Wandong Primary School cyclic policy review process.

CERTIFICATION:

This policy was adopted at the School Council meeting held at Wandong Primary School on October 21, 2019

Signed:.....

School Council President

Signed:.....

School Principal