



Parent Payment Policy



AIMS

To conform to the guidelines from the Department of Education and Training.

To provide a clear distinction between the three categories of payment and to be accountable for the use that payments and contributions are put to.

To collect the maximum revenue in payments and contributions.

To provide fairness in terms of program options and payment methods for parents.

RATIONALE

Merrijig Primary School offers a rich and varied program to students. In order for this to continue and to expand, contributions from parents are necessary to meet funding shortfalls.

DEFINITIONS

Free Education - Victorian legislation provides that instruction in the standard curriculum program must be provided free to all students in Victorian government schools. Free instruction includes the provision of learning and teaching activities, instructional supports, materials and resources, and administration and facilities associated with the standard curriculum program. The costs associated with the administration and coordination of the standard curriculum program are considered to be part of free instruction and must not be passed onto parents.

Standard Curriculum Program - The standard curriculum program is made up of the eight key learning areas agreed to by all the States and Territories and the Commonwealth. These are the arts, English, health and physical education, languages other than English, mathematics, science, studies of society and environment and technology.

The standard curriculum program includes the core learning and teaching activities associated with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and senior secondary certificates such as VCE.

All students must have access to the standard curriculum program. This policy will ensure students are not treated differently, denied access to the 'standard curriculum program', or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions.

All records of payments or contributions are confidential. The public identification of students or their parents or guardians who have or have not made a payment or contribution is unacceptable and must not occur in any circumstances.

What are parents and guardians required to pay for?

Parents can be asked to pay for essential education items including:

- items which students take possession of, including text books and student stationery

- materials for learning and teaching where your child consumes or takes possession of the finished articles
- school uniform (where applicable)
- travel costs incurred in the course of receiving the instruction from a teacher or other person

What are the optional extras that parents may have to pay for?

Optional extras are those that are provided in addition to the 'standard curriculum program', and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis and if you choose to access them for your child you will be required to pay for them. These items include:

- instructional supports, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program (for example, student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use, and religious education materials)
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (for example, instrumental music tuition)
- entry fees for school run performances, productions and events
- materials and services offered in addition to the 'standard curriculum program' (for example, school magazines or school photographs)
- essential services associated with, but not considered to be part of, 'instruction' in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (for example, transport and entrance costs).
- school facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the 'standard curriculum program', and not otherwise provided for through the School Resources Package (for example, student accident insurance).

Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following:

- contributions to a building or a library trust fund (ATO approved and tax deductible)
- contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (for example, equipment, materials or services in addition to those funded through the Student Resource Package. This may include additional computers or student-related services)
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Implementation:

On correspondence to parents, it has to be clear if the charge is:

1. For essential educational items which parents are required to provide or pay the school to provide such as stationery, books, school uniforms, programs provided by outside specialist (eg. visiting artist, speakers, performers) compulsory excursions which are part of course work; also for subjects where the student consumes or takes possession of finished products
2. For optional extras which are offered by invitation on a user-pays system. This may include camps, optional excursions), Drama productions and extra-curricular activities.

The schedules set should take into account:

1. To keep charges to parents relative to the costs of school programs
2. The fact that parents may be on welfare benefits

3. The fact that parents might have more than one child in the school

A. That parents should be able to discuss, individually and confidentially, alternative schedules for payment in hardship cases and that it is possible to negotiate these alternative schedules.

B. That students can be excluded from activities that are optional or extra- if there is no payment or subject elective fees are outstanding.

C. That no student can be excluded from the school program for non-payment of voluntary contributions.

D. That parents be notified early with requests for payment – no less than six weeks.

E. That parents may be required to pay a deposit towards their child’s enrolment before the commencement of the school year.

F. That the payment schedule should coincide with CSEF payments.

G. That assessment, reporting and promotion not be affected by payments and their confidentiality is maintained.

H. That communication with parents, including CASES 21 invoices should make the School’s policy clear.

I. More than one request to parents for essential and optional charges is allowable. Personal follow-ups for non-payment of essential fees are to be made by the School.

RECEIPTING

As per DEET requirements receipts must be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

SUPPORT OPTIONS

Parents who have difficulty paying for essential items may have access to a range of support options including:

- Access to **State Schools Relief Committee** support via the principal to assist with clothing/uniforms.

EVALUATION:

Policy reviewed every 3 years

Reviewed: 2018

Next Review: 2021