

PARENT PAYMENTS AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

Rationale:

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

Implementation:

- This policy is based on the new DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Policy.
- School Council and the Finance Committee will ensure that the school complies with the DET policy.
- The school is to provide parents with early notice of requests for payment of Essential Education Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions, i.e. a minimum of 4 weeks' notice. Payment may be requested, but not required, prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- The school will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment.
- The school will ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents/guardians are confidential.
- The school may issue only one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.

Essential Education Items –

Are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

These items include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. home economics, photography, catering)
- school uniform
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

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 parents and guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- student computer printing for personal use
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes
- school-based performances, productions and events
- school magazines, class photographs

Voluntary Financial Contributions –

Schools may invite parents and guardians to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. These may include:

- contributions to a building or library fund;
- contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school;
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.
- Maintenance Levy as an alternative to attending a working bee

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Other 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;

State School Relief

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 access to State Schools Relief Committee support via the Welfare Officer which can assist with uniform.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

Schools are required to use the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) payment for expenses relating to Camps, Sport and/or Excursions for the benefit of the eligible student.

Some common examples of school-organised programs for which the CSEF payment may be used include:

- School camps/trips
- Swimming and other school-organised sporting programs.
- Outdoor education programs.
- Excursions/incursions

The CSEF payment cannot be used towards voluntary school charges, nor towards books, stationery, school uniforms, before/after school care, music lessons or other optional items.

Parents and guardians who hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, may be eligible for CSEF. This allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of the child.

The total CSEF amount per student will be allocated in consultation with parents/carer.

Payment Arrangements and Non-Payment

Students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions;

- parents and guardians will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp;
- invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month;
- only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is to be sent to all parents and guardians;
- under no circumstances will collectors of any type including debt collectors, be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

Exception – Extra Curricular Programs or Activities

Whereby a student has engaged in extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes, school-based performances, productions and events etc. and full payment has not been made by the end of the 1st term, the student will not be permitted to continue in this class during the next term until full payment has been made.



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Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

The Principal will ensure any records of payment or contribution by parents and guardians is kept confidential. The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is deemed unacceptable and will not occur in any circumstances.

Certification:

This policy was adopted at the School Council meeting held at Healesville High School in March 2008.

Signed.....
School Council President

Signed
Principal

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 22/02/2017

References:

Department Policy Requirements

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

Parent Payment Categories Flowchart

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/parentpaycatflow.pdf>