

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

School Councils are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in the three categories – essential education items, optional education items and voluntary financial contributions.

Valkstone Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. School Council determines the level of class requirements and all children receive the same books and stationery.

No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

DET GUIDELINES

Parent Payment Categories

- 1. Essential education items** are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

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, ceramics, photography, catering);
- school uniform;
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

- 2. Optional education items** (or non-essential materials and services) 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. Payments will be on a cost recovery model, excluding fundraising events.

These items include:

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

3. **Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance or updating curriculum based materials for the Library and Computers. Donations made to the Library fund will be tax-deductible.
4. **A Building Fund** is also an option for voluntary payment. School Council will nominate projects for which parents may make tax deductible donations.

Support options

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. Families who are experiencing financial hardship can contact the principal for financial consideration. A range of support options are available to assist parents.

- CSEF
- Second hand uniform
- State Schools' Relief

IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Payment arrangements

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

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

Option 1 Full amount

Option 2 Payment at the beginning of each Term

Option 3 Pay as you go

Option 4 Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

2.2 Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

2.3 Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

2.4 Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

- This policy will be evaluated and reviewed annually by the Finance Subcommittee and School Council or as directed by DET policy and direction.
- Implementation will be monitored for all stakeholders.
- Essential Education costs will be approved by School Council.
- Audit reports will monitor practices and budgets.

REVIEW CYCLE

Policy last reviewed	February 2023
Approved by	School Council –
Next scheduled review date	review in February 2024.