

## PARENT PAYMENT POLICY Brunswick South Primary School

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Responsible for</b>
<b>Implementation Date</b>	March 2020	<b>Review</b>
March 2019		Policy Subcommittee

### Rationale

This policy is to support the process for collection of parent payments to facilitate quality learning for students.

### Aims

The policy aims to ensure fair and equitable resources for use within the School and to create a clear and precise process working in partnership with parents/guardians to support the best learning environment for students.

### 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 parents<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Parent<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Implementation

- To provide parents/guardians with reasonable notice of requests for payment of booklists, material charges and voluntary contributions under the headings of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of 6 weeks notice will be given to allow parents/guardians sufficient planning time to meet financial commitments. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the school year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- Enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions. All information will be kept confidential.
- This school-level policy will ensure that all communication with parents about education items, including requests for payment, is fair and reasonable.
- Parent/guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and they have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate.
- If parents/guardians require assistance with payments, they should write to the Principal or Business Manager who will respond with alternative payment options.
- Details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school
- A copy of the school-level policy is available upon request.
- Essential education items are those items used in the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents/guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

These items include:

- Materials that the individual student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery.
- Essential services associated with, but not considered to be a part of instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend e.g. transport and entrance costs.
- School Councils may invite parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school.

- The school will make support options available for parents who have difficulty paying for essential items and who can access a range of support options which will include:
  - State Schools Relief committee
  - Staged progress payments/payment plans
- 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.
- All students have access to the standard curriculum program
- 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 of voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to parents/guardians
- Under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents/guardians.
- For families who leave the school throughout the school year, a refund of these parent payments will be reimbursed on receipt of a written request.

**Ref:** Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools 2008.