



# MALVERN VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

## FINANCE

### 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.

### GUIDELINES

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 under three categories only- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions (see Appendix 1 to better understand Parent Payment Categories).

#### Essential Student Learning Items

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

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 or new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

### AIMS

- **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 with 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

## IMPLEMENTATION

### COST AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS

The Principal will 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
- Annual payment requests for school fees are provided to parents a minimum of six weeks' prior to the beginning of the school year, (i.e. before the end of the previous school year) to enable them to budget accordingly.
- Parents will be 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 will be kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel.
- Parents are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next.
- The use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents will not occur.
- 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 will not be generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.
- Ensure that families that experience financial difficulty are aware of the range of support options available to support and assist them, including:
  - Those that can be accessed through "Cost support for families" on the DET website. [www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/school/principals/spag/management/pp\\_costsupportforfamilies.docx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/school/principals/spag/management/pp_costsupportforfamilies.docx)
  - Second-hand uniform shop at school
  - Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) for eligible families
  - State Schools Relief
  - Local Community support
- Consideration of hardship arrangements with respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long-term hardship or short-term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis.
- The school's nominated parent payment contact person, whom they can discuss payment arrangements with, is the Principal. Parents should contact the Principal to arrange a meeting (phone / in person) to discuss alternate arrangements.

### PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

- Essential Education Items are essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program of Malvern Valley Primary School and include:
  - Materials that the individual student takes possession of (either temporarily or permanently), such as textbooks and student stationery
  - Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. Art, Science materials)
  - ICT resources, devices utilised by students and support

- Activities such as sport, swimming, costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).
- Sports equipment
- Optional Education items are available in addition to the standard curriculum program and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them. These items include:
  - Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. Instrumental Music, Representative Sports Teams)
  - School-based performances, productions and events
  - Materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable (e.g. The use of more expensive materials)
  - Materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. School Yearbook)
  - School facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the SRP (e.g. Student accident insurance, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).
- Voluntary Financial Contributions: Parents/guardians, or anyone else, can be invited to make a donation to the school for the following purposes:
  - Contributions to a building trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund (these trust funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax-deductible)
  - Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. Equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers or student-related services
  - General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

## **PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS**

The school provides for a variety of payment arrangements.

- Full payment is accepted at the start of the school year
- Three instalments of equal value to be paid in the second week of terms 1-3
- Alternate arrangement to be discussed and agreed with the Principal

Families have a variety of methods to meet their payments

- BPay, a family reference number which can be used through your whole time at MVPS, details appear on the family statement
- Eftpos, by credit or savings card at the school office
- Cash or Cheques

## **COMMUNICATION**

- This policy will be available on Malvern Valley Primary School's website and will also be referenced in the Parent Contribution Letter which is sent out annually.
- Parents who wish to raise issues with regard to this policy are encouraged to write to School Council (Malvern.valley.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au), who will present the letter as 'Correspondence' at the following meeting. All general enquiries should be directed to the Business Manager

## **REFERENCES**

- DET Schools Policy Advisory Guide  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

## **EVALUATION**

School Council will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement.

**RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: November 2018**

**TO BE REVIEWED: 2019**

# APPENDIX 1 – Understanding Parent Payment Categories

## 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](http://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