



POLICY	PARENT PAYMENTS
DATE	February 2023
SCHOOL COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT	29 November 2022
REVIEW DATE	November 2023

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.

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 parents¹ 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. The attached diagram "**Understanding Parent Payment Categories**" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

PRINCIPLES

- **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 hardships

- **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 in 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

COST AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS

When school councils consider the proposed requests for parent payments the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school.

School principals must 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
- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.
- parents are 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 are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel
- parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next
- use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted
- 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 are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. Principals and school councils exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents. These can be accessed through ["Cost support for families."](#)

Consideration to hardship arrangements in respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis. All schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty.

All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.

ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

In respect to each school's development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

REVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Schools will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department's [School Policy and Advisory Guide](#). Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see: [Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

Secondary Curriculum Contributions - items and activities that students use, or participate in, to access the Curriculum			Amount
Stationery Pack provided for the duration of the program	1 X binder 3D ring-25mm A4 1 packet of binder dividers 1 packet loose-leaf paper 10 plastic inserts 1 pencil case 3.07 1 plastic ruler 2 pens 1 packet 12 coloured pencils 1 pencil, HB 1 pair scissors 1 eraser 1 pencil sharpener 1 glue stick 2 highlighters 1 combination lock 1 Student Diary 1 Book bag	\$5.50 \$1.50 \$3.10 \$1.10 \$2.80 \$1.00 \$2.50 \$4.50 \$0.50 \$2.80 \$0.90 \$1.10 \$1.05 \$1.65 \$15.00 \$15.00 \$15.00	\$ 75.00
Photocopying/printing by school in lieu of textbooks and other resources that the student takes home	EAL appropriate texts and materials	\$65.00	\$ 65.00
Digital and online subscriptions for learning	Kahoot / Teach This / Quizlet / Library software -SCIS & Softlink	\$10.00	\$10.00
Provision and upkeep of school devices, peripherals and ICT	devices owned by the school, class sets, device configuration, maintenance, and server/system costs	\$40.00	\$40.00
Material and equipment provided by the school when the student takes the finished article home	Science materials Physical education equipment	\$10.00 \$10.00	\$ 20.00
TOTAL:			\$210.00
Primary Curriculum Contributions - items and activities that students use, or participate in, to access the Curriculum			Amount
Stationery Pack provided for the duration of the program	2 lined exercise books 2 project books 1 packet 12 coloured pencils 2 pencils 1 pair scissors 1 eraser 1 pencil sharpener 1 glue Stick 1 highlighter 1 ruler	\$8.00 \$11.00 \$4.50 \$3.00 \$2.80 \$0.90 \$1.10 \$1.05 \$1.65 \$1.00	\$35.00
Digital and online subscriptions for learning	SeeSaw / Mosyle / Twinkl / Teach This / Sunshine Books / Library software -SCIS & Softlink	\$15.00	\$15.00

Provision and upkeep of school devices, peripherals and ICT	devices owned by the school, class sets, device configuration, maintenance, and server/system costs	\$30.00	\$30.00
Photocopying/printing by school in lieu of textbooks and other resources that the student takes home	EAL appropriate texts and materials	\$55.00	\$55.00
Material provided by the school when the student takes the finished article home	Art materials Food technology materials Physical Education equipment	\$10.00 \$10.00 \$10.00	\$ 30.00
TOTAL:			\$165.00
Extra-Curricular Items and Activities			
Learning activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience offered in addition to the standard curriculum. These include costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.	Camps and excursions are an integral part of the learning program and are relevant to the curriculum focus each term. Parents or guardians will be requested to make payment for the learning activities included in their child's program. The cost for each learning activity will be itemised and communicated to parents or guardians prior to the activity. Students who qualify for CSEF can offset the cost of camps and excursions through the funding received by the school. Costs relate to transport and entrance fees as well as educational programs as relevant.		
Swimming Lessons	This is an optional and additional program to the swimming and water safety program that is designed to further support students with their progress to learn to swim. Currently BELS receive targeted funding from DET that is used to supplement this program. All costs are included such as: transport, pool entry and lessons and this program is intended to be a free program where funding permits.		
Tax deductible contributions – This fund is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient through the Australian Taxation Office and all contributions are tax deductible.			
Library fund - A tax-deductible contribution to support book purchases and other equipment that sustain the library as a valuable resource.			\$
Total Amount			\$

Financial Support for Families

Blackburn English Language School understands that some families may experience financial difficulty and offers a range of support options, including:

- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund for holders of a Centrelink card
- Specific funding to support families not eligible for CSEF

For a confidential discussion about accessing these services, or if you would like to discuss alternative payment arrangements, contact:

Lee-Ann Derrick, Student Welfare, Ph: 03 9803 4022

Total

Category	
Curriculum Contributions	\$
Other Contributions	\$
Extra-Curricular Items and Activities	\$

Payment methods

Payments are to be made at the General Office, using cash or EFTPOS. If payment cannot be made in full at the time of enrolment, a payment plan can be set up.

Refunds

Students who do not commence the program following enrolment, will be eligible to a full refund.

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW



FREE INSTRUCTION



PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions	Other Contributions	Extra-Curricular Items and Activities
Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.	Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.	Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

- Schools may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices).



FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES

- Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn't miss out.
- Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.



SCHOOL PROCESSES

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ENDORSEMENT

This **Parent Payments Policy** was endorsed by the School Council of Blackburn ELS in February 2022.

Fiona Purcell
School Council President

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed in line with new legislation, regulations and best practice.

Approved by	School Council
Date Reviewed	February 2022
Responsible for Review	Principal, Business Manager
Review Date	February 2023 (first School Council meeting of the year)