



WALWA PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

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.

Walwa Primary School will endeavour to 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 our school community.

Council recognises that it is Government Policy (Executive Memorandum No. 2005/29, Circular S300-2008) that it is not appropriate for schools to charge parents for the normal educational program. However, Government Policy also acknowledges that additional funds raised from parents may enhance the delivery of education to students and therefore permits School Councils to authorise the collection of such funds, as explained below. Where parents are asked to contribute to particular materials or services, school councils must ensure that:

- that charges are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories (see below)
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- the charge does not exceed the cost of providing those materials or services to the student
- parents are given the option of providing materials and requisites, where appropriate
- sensitivity is shown to the differing circumstances of individual students and families, with alternative payment arrangements being investigated for those who do not have an immediate capacity to contribute
- no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution

PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

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 / guardians under three categories only- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Essential education 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.

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 education 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.

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

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.

It is common for some secondary school subjects to levy for materials used or kept by students (eg. Home Economics). However it is Council's preference not to levy students for materials on a weekly basis. Where possible such costs are incorporated into fees and levies charged at the beginning of the year (note that this may make fees for certain subjects higher – Council wishes to ensure that such legitimate extra costs are known in advance by parents).

Where families are not able to pay fees (or where they choose not to do so) this information is not to be used to repeatedly remind families to make payments. Staff must ensure that students have access to core programs and materials offered within the School - students may not be prevented from participating in the School's core curriculum due to the non-payment of fees. The exception to this is optional educational activities and materials such as most camps, excursions and technology models that students may take from the school. If needed, staff should structure learning programs so as to not disadvantage students who do not pay fees or the costs of optional programs.

Payment of fees may be made to the school once booklists have been provided to parents and students have chosen their preferred course of study but may not be required from parents prior to the start of the new school year.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the beginning of the new school year).

To assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

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

Option A	Full amount at the beginning of Term 1
Option B	Payment at the beginning of each Term
Option C	Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3)
Option D	Other payment arrangements

Payment requests 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.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

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

PAYMENT SUPPORT OPTIONS

State Schools Relief Committee

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 access to State Schools Relief Committee support via the Director of Student Services which can assist with clothing / uniforms.

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, swimming and other school-organised sporting programs, outdoor education programs and excursion / incursions.

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 your children.

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

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

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 experiencing hardship should contact the principal and / or the business manager to discuss payment arrangements.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The Parent Payments policy will be published on the school website as downloadable copies and a printed copy can be made available through the General Office.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Walwa Primary School 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.

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

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

Respect

Courage



Resilience

Compassion

A Strong Beginning for a Great Future

22nd March 2021

Dear «Title» «Surname»,

Regarding Parent Payments 2021

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* provides that instruction in the standard curriculum program is delivered free to all students in Victorian Government schools; this is referred to as 'free instruction'. The Act also grants school councils the power to charge fees for goods and services to support the delivery of free instruction and to raise funds.

Free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities required to provide the standard curriculum program. The standard curriculum program includes core learning and teaching activities related to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and senior secondary educational programs.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development *Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools* policy provides advice on the different types of payments that schools can request from parents and outlines the procedures and protocols schools must adhere to. This policy is available from the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide (www.education.vic.gov.au/spag).

School councils are responsible for developing and approving a school-level parent payment policy that is compliant with the Department's policy.

There are three areas for which parents may reasonably be requested to make a payment or contribution:

- **essential education items** which parents/guardians pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate (for example, stationery, text books and excursions (travel and entry costs));
- **optional education items** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents/guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (for example, school magazines or extracurricular programs or activities); and
- **voluntary financial contributions** which parents/guardians may be invited to donate to the school.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children are provided with essential education items. The school makes every effort to keep the cost of items that need to be purchased at a minimum. Parents/guardians also have the option of providing essential education items themselves.

Alternative payment arrangements are also available through the school.

The Walwa Primary School Council has made a considerable effort to ensure that this school policy is fair and provides a number of options to support parents to access the materials and services associated with their child's education.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss your circumstances and the options available to you, please contact the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Lynch
PRINCIPAL