



23rd October 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Parent Payments 2019

The Chelsea Primary School Council has approved the school's parent payment charges.

The Parent Payment Policy, and how the school will implement the policy, is attached as well as the 2019 list of payment items/services requested for your child's program.

While payment is not required until the start of the 2019 school year we would appreciate payment by 14th December 2018 to enable us to have classroom supplies ready to start the new school year.

All parent payments and contributions can be made by Qkr, Bpay, cash, cheque or debit/credit card.

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulty in meeting payment requests.

A number of support options are available to parents who have difficulty making payments including the school's second-hand uniform shop, State Schools Relief or the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.

If you will experience difficulty in making the requested payments please contact the Acting Principal, Jan Smith by phone, 9773 2055 or email chelsea.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au, to confidentially discuss alternative arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Acting Principal

School Council President

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

CHELSEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

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.

¹ Parent' 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.

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 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 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](#)

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



CHELSEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parent Payment Policy

Chelsea Primary School is committed to providing the best possible educational opportunities for all students. Parent Contributions make it possible for the School to maintain its high standards of education in quality facilities. The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 grants School Councils the power to charge fees for goods and services to support the delivery of free instruction and to raise funds.

The Department of Education and Training have issued a “Parent Payment Policy and Implementation” which includes descriptions of what constitutes free education and which items Schools are able to request Parent Contributions.

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

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

Parent Payment Categories

Essential student learning items are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

These items include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationary;
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished article (i.e. home economics, art, technology, photography, catering);
- school uniform;
- transport, entrance and costs for excursions/incursions which all students are expected to attend.

Optional 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.

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 performance, production and events;
- school magazines, newsletters and class photographs;
- camps and swimming programs.

Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services that parents or guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance (including turf maintenance), fences, head lice inspections or our Building Maintenance fund.

Chelsea Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. Due to our ability to bulk order we are able to provide high quality materials at a reduced price.

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child is provided with essential education items. Whilst parents and guardians have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from

other sources we strongly encourage you to purchase the Essential Student Learning items through the school to ensure that all students in the class are using the correct items. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

All parent payments and contributions can be made via QkR (preferred method) and Bpay online or by EFTPOS, Credit Card, Cheque or Cash.

While payment is not required until the start of the 2019 school year, we would appreciate payment by 14th December 2018. Payment can be made in full, half or quarterly instalments.

If you choose to pay in full or by instalment, the due dates are as follows;

FULL PAYMENT		HALF INSTALMENTS		QUARTERLY INSTALMENTS	
Term 1	29 th January 2019	Term 1	14 th December 2018	Term 1	14 th December 2018
		Term 3	28 th June 2019	Term 2	5 th April 2019
				Term 3	28 th June 2019
				Term 4	20 th September 2019

Students enrolling at Chelsea Primary School after the start of the school year will be invoiced for Essential Student Learning Items on a pro-rata basis.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

Chelsea Primary School appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting payment requests. A range of support options are available to parents who have difficulty, these include;

- Second hand and low cost options (e.g. school clothing pool, low cost suppliers)
- CSEF (Camps, Sport & Excursions Fund)
- State Schools Relief
- Local community agencies and service clubs

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

Families who have difficulty in making payments are invited to contact the Principal to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the school.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

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

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

Payment requests are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable.

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

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

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

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Chelsea Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date of approval by School Council

23rd October 2018