

PARENT PAYMENT

POLICY

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.

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.

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 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

School Specific Policy

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

Templeton Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. The book packs contain high quality materials at a competitive price due to our ability to bulk order.

Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. 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.

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 Categories

Essential education items are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

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. art, cooking, science);
- school uniform
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

Optional education 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, aerobics
- school-based performances, productions and events; and
- school magazines, newsletters, class photographs.

Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust. Only some donations are tax- deductible.

Other support options

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 parents, including Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) and State Schools Relief Committee support.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund

A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who receive a Centrelink benefit and a Health Care Card or pension card, may be entitled to the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (\$125 per annum per student). The annual allowance amount is paid directly to the school.

To be eligible for the fund, a parent or legal guardian of a student attending a registered Government or non-government Victorian primary or secondary school must:

on the first day of Term two, or; □ on the first day of Term three;

a) Be an eligible beneficiary within the meaning of the *State Concessions Act 2004*, that is, be a holder of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or be an eligible Centrelink Health Care Card (HCC) or Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) holder, OR

b) Be a temporary foster parent, and;

c) Submit an application to the school by the due date.

Parents who receive a Carer Allowance on behalf of a child, or any other benefit or allowance not income tested by Centrelink, are not eligible for the CSEF unless they also comply with one of (a) or (b) above.

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.

Payment arrangements

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

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

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

Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, 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.

Use of debt collectors to obtain any school funds owed is not permitted.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with departmental guidelines

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	November 2018	
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Templeton Primary School

Crestdale Road Wantirna 3152 Telephone 9801 7450 Facsimile 9800 3547

Email templeton.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

www.templetonps.vic.edu.au



Templeton
Primary School

19th November, 2018

Dear Parents,

School Council Student Contributions for 2019

We write with regard to the 2019 School Fees as determined by the 2018 School Council.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) ensures that educational instruction is provided. However, the DET does not provide the additional funding necessary to then cover ancillary costs which supply students with all books and requisites needed for their school year.

The School Council has established the student contribution amounts for the 2019 school year and with your support we can ensure your child will continue to experience the ongoing excellence our school programs offer. The outstanding educational achievements, as evidenced by the NAPLAN results over the past nine years, are testament to the resources provided through the financial support of parents.

Grades Prep to 4 inclusive 2019 school fees per child will be \$565 which includes the fully tax deductible suggested donation amount of \$50 towards the School Building Fund, the Bulk Excursion Levy of \$125 and \$390 for the following Essential Educational Items:

Essential Educational Items:

- Books and Requisites
- Learning materials
- Communication costs
- Photocopying and printing
- Art materials
- Reference materials
- Mathematics
- Stationery

Bulk Excursion Levy:

- Transport and entrance for excursions/incursions which all students are expected to attend. This is referred to as the Bulk Excursion Levy (\$125). This may be paid in total or per excursion.

Optional Extras:

- Swimming program
- ICAS (International Competition and Assessments for Schools)
- Extra-curricular activities e.g. instrumental music tuition, chess classes
- School and class photographs

Requests for these payments will be made at a time leading up to the particular event.

Essential Educational Items

Although the DET allocate funds to assist with the purchase of learning materials, they do not provide the funding required to cover the costs of books and requisites essential for our students and their school year. Hence, the supplement of a levy is necessary in order to acquire the balance of assessed essential materials for your child. The school then uses all funds in the purchase of a bulk buying system which minimises costs in this area.

Parent contributions are allocated to provide the materials necessary to implement our curriculum as planned through our program budgets which also include, among many other things, access to technology and the expenses incurred in the purchase of computer site licences, for example.

Optional Extras

These programs or extracurricular activities items are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents/guardians may choose whether their child accesses or participates in.

Building Fund

Templeton Primary School has an impressive school site and this donation ensures that this site is well maintained throughout the year. We do not request that families help with the upkeep of the school site nor do we have working bees throughout the school year. Maintenance funds cover the cost of building maintenance and improvements, grounds up keep and additional play equipment.

This amount is now fully tax deductible and a tax invoice/receipt will be issued on payment.

Payment Arrangements:

Dates for payment

Payment can be made at the school office on any day from Monday 25th November 2018 until Thursday 19th December or any day from Tuesday 29th January 2019. It is important for contributions to be paid on time as the school incurs considerable cost in purchasing materials which students are required to have available to them so they are ready to start their school year. We seek your cooperation in making an early payment.

Payment methods

Payments can be made by via the Xuno application, cheque, cash, credit card or BPAY option. The attached statement includes your unique Biller Code Reference. The payment details sheet must be returned to school for ALL payments and is most important if you choose to use the BPAY facility.

Payment by instalment

Parents who wish to pay by regular instalments need to complete the attached parent payment plan application. Should you have any questions on the payment plan option you are welcome to contact the Principal or Business Manager.

Financial hardship

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 the State Schools Relief Committee. Parents who have concerns regarding their ability to pay contributions are invited to contact the Principal for discussion.

CSEF

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) will provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. \$125 per year is paid for eligible primary school students. Payments are made directly to the school. Application forms are available at the School Office.

If you have any queries concerning this notice please contact one of the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Morris
School Council President

Rodney McKinlay
Principal

Pamela Raines
Business Manager

Templeton Primary School

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Grades 5 and 6, 2019 school fees per child will be \$600 which includes the fully tax deductible suggested donation amount of \$50 towards the School Building Fund, Inter-school sport \$30, 5/6 student diary \$5, the Bulk Excursion Levy of \$125 and \$390 for the following Essential Educational Items:

Essential Educational Items:

- Books and Requisites
- Learning materials
- Communication costs
- Photocopying and printing
- Art materials
- Reference materials
- Mathematics
- Stationery

Bulk Excursion Levy:

- Transport and entrance for excursions/incursions which all students are expected to attend. This is referred to as the Bulk Excursion Levy (\$125). This may be paid in total or per excursion.

Optional Extras:

- School camps
- Swimming program
- ICAS (International Competition and Assessments for Schools)
- PEEP (Physical Education Extension Program)
- Extra-curricular activities e.g. instrumental music tuition, chess classes
- School and class photographs

Requests for these payments will be made at a time leading up to the particular event.

Essential Educational Items

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