
School Council Approved: Oct 2018

Review date: 2019

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.

This policy ensures that:

- costs are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution
- access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.

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

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.

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 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 stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. cooking ingredients)
- school uniform
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.
- student computer printing for personal use

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:

- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes

- school-based performances, productions and events
- school magazines, class photographs.

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, a library or building trust. **Stratford Primary School does not request voluntary financial contributions.**

Family 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 eligible parents, including the State Schools Relief Committee support, CSEF and investigation of support from community groups such as Lions Club and Rotary.

Payment arrangements and methods

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items and optional educational items.(e.g. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the start of the next school year).

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 on a regular schedule.

Payments may be made by cash, cheque, direct debit to school bank account, EFTPOS and Centrepay payments are also available.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each items falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item or optional education item.

Where ever possible receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

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

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

Consideration of Hardship

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

Communication with families

Parent payment policy will be sent home with end of year package. Copies are available from the school office or website.

Review Cycle

This policy was last updated on October 2018 and is scheduled for review in October 2021