

Yarra Junction Primary School

School Number: 3216



PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

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Approval by Principal	<i>Lisa Rankin 24th August 2022</i>
Responsible for Review	Business Manager
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References	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Yarra Junction 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- Curriculum Contributions, Extra-Curricular Items or Activities and Other Contributions.

Curriculum Contributions, Parents are invited to contribute and are those items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers

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.

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.

Extra-Curricular items or Activities 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 invited to pay for them.

Other Contributions, Parents are invited to make a contribution 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 itemized 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](#)

YARRA JUNCTION PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parent Payment Policy

PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

- *Curriculum Contributions: In accordance with the 'Parent payments in Victorian Government Schools' directives, our Curriculum Contributions is a voluntary charge that we invite parents to pay to covers items which are essential for your child's schooling. they are also given the opportunity to purchase their own items.*
- *Extra-Curricular items and Activities which are on a user-pays basis. Items in which parents/guardians are able to choose whether their child participates or accesses (e.g., camps, excursions).*
- *Other Contributions: Parents/Guardians may be invited to make contributions to support the ongoing effective running and development of the school (e.g., Building and Library Fund donations).*

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Parents are able to pay via the following options.

1. *Lump sum payment*
2. *Installment plan (to be arranged with the Principal/Business Manager)*

Payments can be made via Cash, EFTPOS, BPAY or Payment Plans Via Compass.

Centrepay deductions can also be arranged with the Business Manager.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

- *Secondhand uniforms are available to purchase for a gold coin donation*
- *Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund for eligible families*
- *State Schools Relief*
- *Local community supports*

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

The school will provide support to parents experiencing hardship by:

- *Parents arranging an appointment with our School Principal or Wellbeing Co-Ordinator.*

- *Linking families with local support services, where appropriate.*
- *Hardship fund*

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

- *It is the responsibility of the School Council to monitor the implementation and review of this policy.*

Date of approval by School Council (/8/2022)

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW



FREE INSTRUCTION

- Schools provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
- Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.



PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.

Other Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities

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

- Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.