PARENT PAYMENTS

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.

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.

**Aims:**

To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.

**Implementation:**

1. 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 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. Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by December of the previous year.
2. All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where payments have or have not been received will not occur.
3. All costs and processes associated with parent payments will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to Department of Education requirements, and will be within the expectations and capacity of the school community.
4. As with all parent payments to the school, Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal.
5. No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents or students.
6. Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly.
7. The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to it.

**Evaluation:**

1. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle. School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in.... August 2017