



Parent Payment and Voluntary Contributions Policy

RATIONALE

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.

AIMS

IMPLEMENTATION

Knox Park Primary selects the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our students. 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 will be done in consultation with the school, as items are required to meet the specifications provided by the school. There will be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

No student will be 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 for which parents and guardians are responsible. Parents may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide essential items.

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;
- 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.

These items include:

- student computer printing for personal use;
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, swimming, camps, excursions;
- school-based performances, productions, and events;
- school yearbook, 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, building fund.

Other support options

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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 State Schools Relief Committee support and CSEF (Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund)

Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund (CSEF)

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.

Some common examples of school-organised programs for which the CSEF payment may be used include:

- School camps/trips
- Swimming and other school-organised sporting programs.
- Outdoor education programs.
- Excursions/incursions

The CSEF payment cannot be used towards voluntary school charges, nor towards books, stationery, school uniforms, before/after school care, music lessons or other optional items.

Parents and guardians, who hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, may be eligible for CSEF. This allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child/ren.

The total CSEF amount per student will be allocated in consultation with parents/carers.

Students changing schools

If the student transfers to another Victorian school, the default position is that the value of any unspent portion of the CSEF should follow to the student's new school, so that the student has access to the full value of the payment.

However, if the unspent portion is of a minimal amount, the schools may agree that the funds are not transferred as long as the new school commits to provide the student with assistance to the value of the unspent amount.

Students leaving the school system

If the student leaves the Victorian school system, the CSEF payment will remain with the school and may be used towards the expenses for other family siblings, or school-incurred costs associated with operating camps, sports or excursion activities for students.

Remaining funds

Any remaining portion of the CSEF not expended by the end of the school year may be carried forward by the school towards the following year's camps, sports and excursions expenses for the eligible child.

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).

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 on book collection days in the prior year or at the beginning of Term 1

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- Option B Monthly Credit card Instalments
- Option C Set up of Centrepay via Centrelink
- 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.

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

Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

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 remain confidential.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every three years and ratified annually as part of the school's policy review cycle.

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