

PARENT PAYMENTS

GEORGE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY

Purpose:

To ensure consistency in parent payment practices, transparency and to ensure 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.

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:

This policy ensures that:

- Costs are kept to a minimum
- Payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories of:
 1. *Essential Student Learning Items*
 2. *Optional Items*
 3. *Voluntary Financial Contributions*
- 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.

Parent Payment Categories (What schools charge for)

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, however all items must be appropriate to the learning activities.

These items include:

- (Yearly book pack) 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. Student folio, writing materials, USB, pencil case, book bag, normal cooking class)
- School uniform, products that children get to take home, i.e. technology, student I.D cards, projects they've made –dioramas.
- Transport and entrance fees for camps and excursions which 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. For example, our cooking program, photography classes, are provided extra to the standard curriculum.

These items include:

- student computer printing for personal use
- cooking materials for Home Economics /electives offered. These will be costed per breakdown of costs each session.
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes, recorders, photography, elective subjects such as cooking classes.
- school-based performances, productions and events
- school magazines, class photographs.
- School bus /petrol –insurance –upkeep (if using)
- Graduation /functions, formals. Guest speaker fees, camps, excursions. Sporting events. Entry fees for school run performances.

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. Some voluntary contributions are tax deductible.

- Building fund, library fund,

Family Hardship / 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 eligible parents, including a payment plan suited to your needs, State Schools Relief Committee, Second hand and low cost options for school uniform. CSEF assistance, local community support, CSEF, along with support provided from the school. No child at George Street Primary School will miss out on essential items, or optional items required for electives, if in need of support it is essential that you contact the school ASAP for support options.
- CONTACT PERSON: Tina Walkeden and /or Jane McCulloch

The principal will assist families when requests for support are received.

Implementation /communication:

Payment arrangements

- Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). Letters will go home towards the end of Term 4 with payment and cost details, plus a note will go into the newsletter towards the end of Term 4 each year.
- This policy will be on the school's website for easy retrieval.
- 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, such as fortnightly payment plans
- 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. Please contact Jane McCulloch if an appointment is required.

- 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 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 extras 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 per year to parents and guardians.
- All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

Monitoring /Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle. It is the School Council’s responsibility to monitor the implementation of this policy. Once the policy is ratified it will be uploaded onto the school’s website.

Contact with the school

Any concerns about payments, fees or charges can be raised with the Business Manager or Principal. Please contact the school on 5571 1478 for further advice.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	October 2018	
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