

# HARTWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

## Philosophy

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services in the course of instruction to raise funds. This policy covers payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions that schools may request, and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

## Context

Free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities associated with the provision of the standard curriculum. The standard curriculum includes core learning and teaching activities associated with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) provides funding to schools through the Student Resource Package (SRP) and various programs. School councils can request payments from parents for student materials and services charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:

- **essential education items** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. stationery, text books and school uniforms where required)
- **optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. school magazines, extra curricular programs or activities)
- **Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school (e.g. grounds beautification, additional computers).

## Guidelines

- Essential education items are those used in the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program which parents/guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide. They include materials that the individual student takes possession of, materials for learning, school uniform and essential services such as costs associated with camps and excursions, which all students are expected to attend such as transport and entrance costs.
- Optional extras are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them. These items include instructional support material, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program. Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the curriculum, including instrumental music classes are optional extras as are school-based performances, productions and events.
- School council may invite parents and guardians of a student enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. Voluntary financial contributions may be collected for the following purposes:
- contributions to a building trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund (these trust funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax deductible)
- - contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers or student-related services

- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school

This policy aims to ensure that:

- students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions
- parents/guardians will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp
- invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents will be generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month
- only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents/guardians
- under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used to obtain any funds from parents/guardians.

Principals must ensure any record of payments, contributions or non-payment by parents is kept confidential.

### **Implementation**

- A minimum of six weeks notice should be given to allow parents/guardians sufficient time to make payment.
- Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used
- It is not an option to withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are confidential.
- Communications regarding Parent payments must be accompanied by the following information:
  - Parent/guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and they have the option of purchasing these through the school
  - The availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the principal
  - Details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school
  - A copy of this policy is available upon request.
- Payment requests or letters to parents must clearly identify which category the items fall into, i.e. essential education items, optional education items or voluntary financial contributions.

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

Feb 2020