Parent Payments and Voluntary Contributions Policy
Mooroopna Primary School

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.

This policy ensures that:

- costs are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories
- 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.

Mooroopna Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.

Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

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 that parents or guardians are requested to pay the school. Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

**Optional education items** are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to, or in support of, the standard curriculum program. 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.

**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.

**Family 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. These options include:

- State School’s Relief
- Second-hand uniform In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children’s education the school has a supply of second hand uniforms.

*This policy was last ratified by School Council on 21st November, 2016*
- Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund available to all eligible families
- Prep CSEF Uniform Package

- **Saver Plus** is an initiative of Brotherhood of St Laurence and ANZ, delivered locally by community organisations in 22 locations in Victoria. Saver Plus assists individuals and families on lower incomes to have every dollar up to $500 saved over a 10-month period matched by ANZ to go towards education-related costs.

- **The Smith Family’s ‘Learning for Life program’** provides financial support, guidance and mentoring for disadvantaged students. The Smith Family works with a select number of schools and may require referral from the school principal.

- The Commonwealth Government provides a range of payments and services to help families look after their children’s health, education and other family issues.

**Consideration of Hardship**

In addition to the Family Support options outlined above parents may communicate with the Business Manager by phone, email or in person about their financial situation and related difficulties in making payments.

**Communication with Families**

The school’s implemented Parent Payment Policy will be communicated with our school community via, our website, newsletter, Tiqbiz and printed information sent home to families.

Families may raise any issues, make general enquiries about charges or register any complaints by contacting the Business Manager by phone or MPS email.

**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).

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: Payment via regular Centrepay deductions
- Option D: 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.

*This policy was last ratified by School Council on 21st November, 2016*
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 items 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.

The following documents, as attached, form part of this policy:

2017 Parent Payment
Parent Payment in Victorian Government Schools
Understanding Parent Payment Categories

References
DET Policy –

Evaluation
Mooroopna Primary School will monitor the implementation of this policy and identify the factors/measures to be taken into account, such as transparency of processes and engagement with parents.

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school’s annual review cycle.
2017 Parent Payment

Name of child: _______________________

Please find the itemised list of essential education items (those items that your child needs for school).

At Mooroopna Primary School we are committed to providing a high quality education for all of our students. Apart from delivering a comprehensive curriculum, School Council enriches these programs by providing ICT resources (Information and Communications Technology), extra curricula activities such as our Education Week celebrations and cultural activities. We make every effort to keep the cost and number of items that need to be purchased to a minimum and try to ensure that the costs are affordable for all parents.

Payment is not required until 2017. We would appreciate payment by the end of Term 1, 2017.

Essential education items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Requisites</td>
<td>Writing books, scrapbooks, pens, pencils, coloured pencils, textas, markers, rulers, cover paper</td>
<td>$90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumables</td>
<td>Art / Craft (eg. Book week activities, Mother’s / Father’s Day activities)</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software accessible at school and at home</td>
<td>Ziptales - ($400 per annum) – Foundation Students OR Mathletics – Years 1-6</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying &amp; Printing</td>
<td>Photocopied / printed worksheets instead of parents purchasing text books</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub Total: $150

Swimming program
Entry, pool hire and travel costs for 5 lessons - to be confirmed in 2017 (2016 cost per student $55)

Excursions & Incursions
All students are given the opportunity to attend various excursions and incursions throughout the school year – for example: House swimming sports, Dance Festival, House athletic sports, Cultural Days, Interschool Athletics, Life Ed Van.
Students in Years 5 & 6 can choose to attend a School Camp and students in Years F-4 are offered a major excursion.
Each of these events will be costed and families informed of the charge closer to the actual time of the event.

TOTAL: $150

CSEF: Eligible families can apply for $125 per Primary School student. These funds can only be used for camps, excursions, sports and swimming

Note: Parents may choose to provide or purchase some items themselves. If you choose to do this you must consult with the school so that your child has the right items. There may be some items or services you cannot purchase yourself.
**Parent Payment Arrangements**

**Please indicate your preferred method of payment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option A</td>
<td>Full amount in Term 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option B</td>
<td>Four payments – one payment at the beginning of each Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option C</td>
<td>Centrepay – arrangements can be made for regular Centrepay deductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option D</td>
<td>I have completed a CSEF application form to pay for swimming, excursions and incursions. I will pay the balance, $150, using one of the above options (please indicate A, B or C).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CSEF:** Eligible families can apply for $125 per Primary School student. **These funds can only be used for camps, excursions, sports and swimming**

**I HAVE ENCLOSED PAYMENT OF** $________

*Payments can be made by cash, cheque payable to Mooroopna Primary School, BPay and Credit Card. BPay details can be obtained from your statement or at the Main Office.*
Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools
Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

The Department's new Parent Payment Policy brings a stronger focus to transparency and family hardship, as well as outlining the expectations of implementation and communication with parents. The policy also emphasises that all children should have access to the standard curriculum regardless of their parents' ability to pay.

The following frequently asked questions provide further details about the types of payments schools can request from families.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD CURRICULUM PROGRAM?
The standard curriculum program is made up of the eight key learning areas agreed to by the States, Territories and Commonwealth. These areas are: English, Mathematics, Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, the Arts, Languages, Health and Physical Education, and Technologies.

The standard curriculum also includes the four capability areas: Critical and Creative Thinking, Intercultural, Ethical, and Personal and Social.

To clarify, 'the standard curriculum for years F-10' means the implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10. 'The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools' means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

DOES FREE INSTRUCTION STILL APPLY TO SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATES SUCH AS VCE AND VCAL INCLUDING VET IN SCHOOLS PROGRAMS?
Yes. Free instruction applies to senior secondary certificates as the standard curriculum program includes certificates such as VCE and VCAL. VET in Schools programs are part of VCE and VCAL and therefore instruction is free. Costs that could be considered supports, resources, administration or school facilities required to deliver instruction in the standard curriculum, cannot be charged for.

If the student consumes or takes temporary or permanent possession of an item/service which supports the free instruction in the standard curriculum program, this is an Essential Student Learning Item for which payment may be sought.

This includes the purchase of materials for a VET program such as wood for making a standard/agreed item in VET furnishing.

I THOUGHT PUBLIC EDUCATION IS FREE. WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED TO PAY?
Schools are funded to deliver a quality education based on the standard curriculum. Schools receive additional government funds based on the needs of the students or location.

Parent payments are a valuable contribution to enhancing and enriching the educational experience. These payments allow schools to offer enhanced programs and opportunities which their school communities expect them to offer.

Schools decide on the learning program they offer based on the needs and aspirations of the school community.

SOME PARENTS BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION IS FREE. WHAT IS FREE IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS?
Victorian legislation clearly states that instruction in the standard curriculum program must be provided free of charge to all students in Victorian government schools.

This 'free instruction' is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.
WHY CAN SCHOOLS SET THEIR OWN PAYMENTS?

The Act allows school councils to set their own payments in accordance with Department of Education and Training policy.

Schools serve different communities with different needs and expectations for the curriculum and are able to request payments to cover costs for their learning programs.

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO PAY FOR DIFFERENT THINGS TO PARENTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS?

Every school is different and each school has the ability to set its own priorities. Therefore, it is common for schools to request different payments from parents because they offer different programs, go on different excursions and have different needs at school. For example, some might want to start a student gardening program and others a photography program.

Schools make parent payment contribution decisions in good faith and in the best interests of their students. They aim to keep costs to a minimum so that they are reasonable and affordable to most parents at the school. In setting their fees, each school ensures that parents understand the links between the school’s learning programs and the payments being requested.

CAN I BE CHARGED FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STANDARD CURRICULUM PROGRAM?

No. The costs associated with the administration and coordination of the standard curriculum program are considered part of free instruction and must not be passed onto parents.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS REQUEST PARENTS TO PAY FOR?

You can be asked to pay for Essential Student Learning Items that the school deems essential to student learning in the standard curriculum including:

- items which students take temporary or permanent possession of, including text books, student stationery and school uniforms (where applicable)
- materials for learning and teaching where students construct, consume or take possession of the finished articles (for example, home economics, ceramics, photography, materials for build-your-own-kits)
- activities that all students are expected to attend (for example, transport and entrance costs).

HOW ARE THE ESSENTIAL STUDENT LEARNING ITEMS PURCHASED?

Schools will offer to purchase these items on behalf of parents, although parents have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources.

If you choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, and should meet the specifications provided by the school. Some items, for example food provisions for home economics, may only be provided by the school.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONAL ITEMS?

Optional items are items or services that are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

These items are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents choose to access them for their child they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- items the student purchases or hires such as school magazines, class photos, fees for guest speakers, functions, formals and student accident insurance
- activities the student purchases such as fees for extra-curricular programs or activities such as instrumental music tuition
- items and materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum (for example, requesting payment for the use of mahogany in woodwork instead of the standard pine).
WHAT ARE VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS?
Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following.

- Contributions to a building or a library fund. These are contributions that have been endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) are tax deductible.
- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school: for example, equipment, materials or services in addition to those funded through the Student Resource Package. This may include additional computers or student-related services.
- General voluntary contributions.

CAN A SCHOOL MAKE REPEATED REQUESTS FOR VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS?
No. Requests for voluntary financial contributions are limited to the initial notice to all parents and guardians and one reminder notice only.

Prior to sending out any reminder notices to parents, schools use their discretion with families where there may be financial difficulty or hardship.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CHARGES THAT I AM BEING ASKED TO PAY FOR?
You should discuss the charges with the parent payment contact person who will be able to explain them to you.

If you are still not clear or not happy with the outcome of your conversation with the parent payment contact person, you should contact the school Principal.

CAN MY CHILD BE DENIED ACCESS TO THE STANDARD CURRICULUM PROGRAM ON THE BASIS OF ME NOT PAYING THESE CHARGES?
No, all students must have access to the standard curriculum program as inclusion and engagement are integral to school policy.

Schools apply the Department of Education and Training policy that ensures students are not treated differently, denied access to the 'standard curriculum program', or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made.

Principals must ensure any record of payments or contributions is kept confidential. Only de-identified information can be provided for reporting purposes.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO HELP ME PAY THESE CHARGES?
A range of support options are available, including:

- Access to State Schools’ Relief Committee support for clothing/uniforms (via the principal).
- The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, which provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions.

For a full range of support options, see: Cost support for families.

WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I AM HAVING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY AND UNABLE TO PAY THE CHARGES?
All schools understand that families can experience financial difficulty or a crisis which makes the payment difficult.

Your school has a parent payment contact person who you can discuss your situation with and help with making alternate payment arrangements. The name and contact details of the parent payment contact person is available in the school’s Parent Payment Policy and Procedures.

You should be able to find this easily on the school’s website. Contact the school if you are unable to find this policy.
Understanding Parent Payment Categories

**Schools**

What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a ‘Parent’ includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

What do schools pay for as part of ‘free instruction’?

Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability
Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

**Parents**

What may parents be asked to pay for?

Schools can request payment for **Essential Student Learning Items**

These are items, activities or services that the school deems essential to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

- **Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of**
  - e.g. textbooks, activity books, exercise books
  - stationery, book bags
  - student ID cards, locks
  - cooking ingredients students will consume
  - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
  - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

- **Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend**
  - i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation
  - e.g. excursions, incursions, school sports, work placements

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

- **Essential Student Learning Items**
- **Optional Items**
- **Voluntary Financial Contributions**

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

Schools can request payment for **Optional Items**

These are items, activities or services that are optional and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

- **Items the student purchases or hires**
  - e.g. school magazines, class photos
  - functions, formal, graduation dinners
  - materials for extra curricular programs
  - student accident insurance

- **Activities the student purchases**
  - e.g. fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
  - fees for guest speakers
  - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
  - entry fees for school run performances

- **Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum**
  - e.g. use of silver in metal work instead of copper
  - supplementary exam revision guides

Schools can invite **Voluntary Financial Contributions**

- Building or Library Fund (Tax deductible)
- Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
- General voluntary contributions

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: www.education.vic.gov.au