

## School Parent Payment Policy

### Purpose

To ensure that Davis Creek Primary School's parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that 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.

### What can schools charge for?

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**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.

### Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

### Cost and support to parents

When school councils consider the proposed requests for parent payments the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school. Due to our ability to bulk order we are able to procure high quality materials at a reduced rate.

### Support for families

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. The Principal and School Council will exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents.

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<sup>1</sup> Parent' in the policy has the same meaning as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

- The **Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund** provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply and a Special Consideration eligibility category also exists.
- **State Schools' Relief** may cover the cost of new school uniforms, shoes, books and more for disadvantaged students. State Schools' Relief only responds to requests from school principals, assistant principals or welfare coordinators. Parents or Carers who are struggling need to make an appointment with the school to discuss their situation.

Consideration to hardship arrangements in respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis.

### Engaging with parents

In respect to each school's development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

### Review of policy implementation

Davis Creek Primary School will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide (<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx>)

### Review Cycle

Ratification	Review	Policy No.	Version No.	Date Produced
Nov 2020	Nov 2021	2	1	Oct 2019