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## THE PATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when we are determining our parent payment practices

Sufficient funds are raised through parent payments and voluntary contributions to enable the school to offer a high quality educational program.

Students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for educational items, services or voluntary financial contribution.

Parent/carer payments for essential education items and optional extras are kept to a minimum and do not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the students.

#### Parent Payment Charges

This policy will cover payments for Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Education Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

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 for student materials and service charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:

- **Essential Student Learning items** are those items, activities or service that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of. (eg. Stationery, text books and school uniforms where required) Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.
- **Optional education items** are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard the curriculum program. eg. Extra curricular programs or activities, school-based performances or events) A variety of extra curricular activities (eg. excursions) will be offered to compliment the educational program and these will be provided on a user-pays basis.
- **Voluntary financial contributions** parents and guardians can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose eg. Grounds beautification, additional computers  
Only some Voluntary financial Contributions are tax-deductible

#### Payment Arrangements and Methods

- Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which materials and services will be used.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments will remain confidential.
- Written payment requests will outline the option of either purchasing essential student learning items from the school or through a local supplier, alternative payment options, details of spending intentions and how to access the school policy.
- Payment requests to parents/carers must clearly identify which category the items fall into. The three categories are outlined above.
- The school will only issue one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.
- Invoices for unpaid essential student learning items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.

- Optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis, and if parents/carers choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.
- The school may invite voluntary financial contributions to improve or beautify buildings or grounds, to contribute to a building trust fund, to support a specific purpose identified by the school (eg. ICT equipment, Hall extension, Landscaping, Garden Program) or to make a general financial contribution or donation to the school.
- Contributions to the Building Trust Fund is tax deductible and receipts will be issued for these payments.

### **Family Support Options**

#### ***Second hand uniform shop***

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the school operates a second-hand school uniform shop.

#### **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 parents, and State Schools Relief Committee support for uniforms.

#### **Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)**

A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who holds an eligible Centrelink benefit and a Health Care Card or pension card, are entitled to access this fund.

#### **Consideration of Hardship**

Consideration of hardship arrangements and concessions are provided to families experiencing long term financial hardship or short-term crisis on a confidential, case-by-case basis. This approach provides for an individualised, family-centered and student outcomes focus that necessarily requires thoughtful consideration of each situation.

- Families that are experiencing financial difficulties can apply for consideration of hardship in respect to payments. Please refer to parent payment options.
- Initial enquiries for families experiencing difficulties are to the Business Manager at the school via email, phone or in person
- The Business Manager will discuss the range of support options available and negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement after approval from the principal.

#### **Communication with Families**

- All communication with parents will be fair and reasonable and based on the spirit of the school's values.
- Parental knowledge, understanding, support and feedback in relation to the contents of this policy is valued and welcome.
- It is important that this policy is communicated within the school and that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.
- The school will provide parents and carers with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks notice will be provided to allow sufficient planning time where possible.
- The school will publish the Parent Policy and Implementation information on the website and all parents and carers will be emailed with a minimum of six weeks notice.

#### **Monitoring and Review of the Implementation of the Policy**

This policy complies with the requirements of the DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Policy which was issued in June 2016. This policy was originally formed, and will be reviewed in consultation with all members of the wider community (all staff, parents, students, and interested members of the community) as part of the school's five - year review cycle.

#### **Further information**

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/lifeatschool/parentpayments.htm>.

Principal \_\_\_\_\_ School Council President \_\_\_\_\_