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## THE PATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### PARENT PAYMENTS AND VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

#### RATIONALE:

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

School Councils can request payments from parents for student materials and service 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. (eg. Stationery, text books and school uniforms where required)
- **Optional education items** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and carers may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in. (eg. Extra curricula programs or activities, school-based performances or events)
- **Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school (eg. Grounds beautification, additional computers)

#### AIMS:

- 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.

#### BROAD GUIDELINES

- This policy complies with the requirements of the DEECD Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Policy which was issued in conjunction with Circular S300-2008 on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008
- It is important that this policy is communicated within the school and that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.
- 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.
- Where families have difficulty making payments, the principal will discuss the range of support options available and negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement.
- All communication with parents will be fair and reasonable and based on the spirit of the school's values.

#### IMPLEMENTATION:

- 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.
- Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which materials and services will be used.

- Payment arrangements should coincide with the timing of the availability of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) support for eligible parents/carers.
- Eligible parents/carers should make a voluntary decision to sign over their portion of the EMA cheque.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments will remain confidential.
- Written payment requests will outline the option of either purchasing essential educational 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 educational 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.

**EVALUATION:**

Parental knowledge, understanding, support and feedback in relation to the contents of this policy. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's five year review cycle.

**Further information**

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