



## *Parent Payment Policy*

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:

- all students have access to the standard curriculum program
- it covers the three parent payment categories i.e. essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions
- the school does not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment for any of the three categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- cost is kept to a minimum
- payment requests must be clearly itemised within each category
- parents/guardians are given the option of purchasing equivalent essential education items themselves, in consultation with the school
- students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, refused instruction or disadvantaged on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions. For example if parents/guardians choose for their children not to attend a compulsory excursion/camp an alternative option needs to be provided.
- the status and details of any payments or non-payments are confidential.
- parents are provided with early notice of payment requests (e.g. a minimum of two weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year).
- 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 meets the community's expectations and is provided to parents.

Principals, as executive officers of school councils, must ensure that the school-level policy complies with the Department's policy and that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.

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 Department of Education. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

### **Essential Education Items**

These 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 to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

- materials that the individual student takes possession of, such as text books and student stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. cooking)
- school uniform (where applicable)
- activities associated with, but not part of instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).

Note: If parents/guardians choose to provide equivalent materials themselves, this should be done in consultation with the school, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school.

### **Optional Education Items**

These are those items that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. 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.

These items include:

- materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. school magazines)
- school facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the SRP (e.g. student accident insurance).

### **Voluntary Financial Contributions**

Parents/guardians, or anyone else can be invited to make a donation to the school for the following purposes:

- contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school/person donating (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.

## **PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS**

Cobram & District Specialist School is committed to improving our service to students and their families by offering flexible and convenient payment options for parent payments.

These options include:

### **DIRECT CREDIT**

School banking details will be published with the start of year charges information giving parents the option of paying directly into the school bank using their surname as a reference.

## **IN PERSON**

Pay at the General Office between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday by either cash, or cheque.

## **MAIL**

Post a cheque to Cobram & District Specialist School, PO Box 213, Cobram 3644

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss circumstances and available options.

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 which each item falls under will be clearly identified as one of the three parent payment categories; essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid parent payments will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS**

### **State School Relief**

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, including the access to State Schools Relief Committee support via the Welfare Officer which can assist with uniform.

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

Schools are required to use the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) payment for expenses relating to Camps, Sport and/or Excursions for the benefit of the eligible student.

Some common examples of school-organised programs for which the CSEF payment may be used include:

- School camps/trips
- Swimming and other school-organised sporting programs.
- Excursions/incursions

The CSEF payment cannot be used towards essential education charges, optional education charges or school uniforms.

Parents and guardians who hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, may be eligible for CSEF. This allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of the child.

The total CSEF amount per student will be allocated in consultation with parents/carers.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed and endorsed by Cobram & District Special School Council every 3 years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

<b>School Council President</b> Elizabeth Moar	<b>26<sup>th</sup> June, 2017</b>
<b>Principal</b> Leah Willis	<b>26<sup>th</sup> June, 2017</b>

<b>Date of approval by School Council</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> June, 2017</b>
<b>Date for review</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> June, 2020</b>