

PURPOSE:

To ensure that 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.

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 parents¹ 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. Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.

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.

The attached diagram "**Understanding Parent Payment Categories**" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

PRINCIPLES

- **Educational value:** Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent payments practices
- **Access, equity and inclusion:** All students have access to the standard curriculum program and participation of all students to the full school program is facilitated
- **Affordability:** Cost to parents is kept to a minimum and is affordable for most families at the school
- **Engagement and Support:** Early identification and engagement strategies by the school ensure parents are well informed of the payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship

¹ 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.

- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **Transparency and Accountability:** School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils

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.

School principals must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment requests are broadly itemised within the appropriate category
- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent Essential Student Learning Items themselves, in consultation with the school
- information on payment options is available, accessible and easily understood to all parents so that they know what to expect and what supports they can access
- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.
- parents are provided with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year-ensuring parents have a clear understanding of the full financial contribution being sought
- the status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel
- parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next
- use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted
- there will be only one reminder notice to parents for voluntary financial contributions per year
- Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES:

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. Principals and school councils 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. These can be accessed through ["Cost support for families."](#)

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. All schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty.

All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.

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.

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 and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

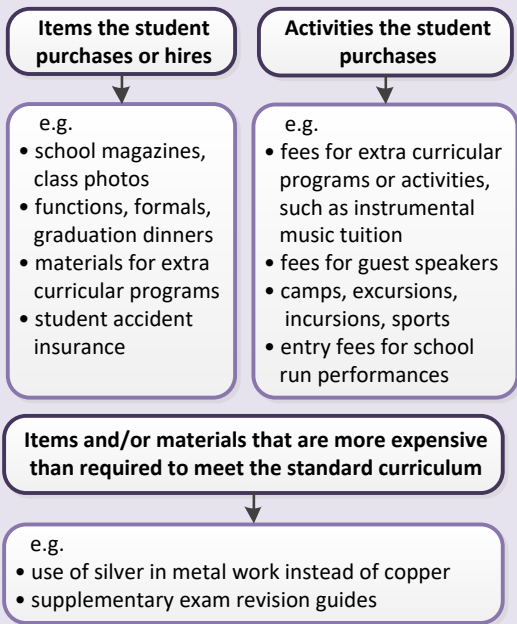
Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

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:



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

Schools can invite **Voluntary Financial Contributions** for



e.g.

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

PARENT PAYMENTS AT INGLEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

<u>Essential Student Learning Items (2018):</u>	\$200.00
• <i>Booklist items</i>	\$75.00
• <i>Sport excursions</i>	\$30.00
• <i>Music is Fun excursion</i>	\$15.00
• <i>Gym Program</i>	\$15.00
• <i>MARC Van</i>	\$25.00
• <i>Cooking Program</i>	\$40.00

Additional Items:

- Year 3/4 and grade 5/6 Camping Programs
- Year Prep – 2 Sleep-over

Voluntary Financial Contributions:

- None prescribed at this time.

The school always welcomes philanthropic donations.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS:

Payments can be made in a number of ways.

- Payments can be made by cash, cheque or direct deposit. Receipts will always be issued for payments made.
- The Essential Student Learning Item fee (\$200 in 2018) can be paid in one lump sum or by 4 (per term) or 2 (per semester) payments.
- Payment plan options can be negotiated with the Principal or Business Manager.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP:

Families who require support are encouraged to speak to the principal. Support is available through:

- CSEF
- State Schools Relief

Communication with families:

- This policy and the payments process will be communicated to parents and carers through the school newsletter, through a letter to all families (see below) and via our website.
- Parents who require any further assistance or clarifications with Parent Payments are encouraged to speak with the Principal or the Business Manager.

REVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

Schools 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](#).

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see:

[Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

Ratified by School Council: March 2018

(Review February 2019)

Principal School Council President Date

INGLEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2018

ALL STUDENTS PREP TO YEAR 6

PLEASE NOTE:

Inglewood Primary School Council seeks to provide a variety of programs which will interest all students. Please note that we do not charge ANY VOLUNTARY FEES.

Inglewood PS has always maintained a very low fee structure to make it affordable for all families. It is imperative that all parents pay school contributions so that the included programs are funded.

If you are having difficulty please make contact with the school to sort out a payment plan. It is always easier to pay by instalments rather than try to pay off the total amount all at once, so make an early start!

	ITEM	TOTAL
2018 BOOKLIST (<i>Items supplied as required from school</i>)		\$75.00
Includes the cost of supplying pens, pencils, textas, rubbers, sharpeners, ruler, scissors, glue sticks, exercise books, tissues and scrapbooks throughout the year.	\$50.00	
Printing and photocopying	\$25.00	
ESSENTIAL SERVICES		\$ 60.00
Gym Program	\$ 15.00	
Music is Fun - Marong	\$ 15.00	
Sport Excursions - athletics, winter sports, cross country	\$ 30.00	
MARC VAN		\$ 25.00
COOKING PROGRAM		\$ 40.00
TOTAL SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS DUE		\$ 200.00

ESTIMATED COST OF CAMPS 2018

School Camp fees will be confirmed and charged closer to the date of the camp. An estimate is provided below, but this is subject to change.

Please note that the camp is not a compulsory activity, so if you do not pay the camp charges when they are advised, your child will not attend their camp.

- Prep to Year 2 Sleepover	\$ 10.00
- Year 3 to 6 Camp	\$ 250.00

CAMPS, SPORTS & EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) provides payments for eligible students to attend activities like: school camps or trips, swimming and school-organised sport programs, outdoor education programs, excursions and incursions. The CSEF payment cannot be used towards voluntary school charges, books, stationery, school uniforms, before/after school care, music lessons, or formals/graduations.

If you applied for the CSEF at your child's school in 2017, you do not need to complete an application form in 2018 unless there has been a change in your family circumstances. We will apply for the CSEF on your behalf.

You will only need to submit the attached application form in 2018 if any of the following changes have occurred: new student enrolments: your child has started or changed schools in 2018 or you did not apply at the same school in 2017 or changed family circumstances: such as a change of custody, change of name, concession card number, or new siblings commencing at the school in 2018.

