

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

Purpose:

The Education and **Training** Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in Victorian government schools. Schools however are able to request payments to enhance and enrich the learning and teaching program for students. School councils are responsible for developing and approving a school-level parent payment policy that is compliant with the Department's policy.

This policy covers the three categories Reservoir Views Primary School may request payment for, and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

Policy Statement

The school council can request payments from parents/ guardians under the following three categories:

1. Essential Student Learning Items: items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program. Where practicable, and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own. Reservoir Views Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. The school orders items in bulk to ensure costs are kept to the minimum. These items may include materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery and excursion fees.

2. Optional Items: items, activities or services that are optional and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum. These optional items are provided on a user-pay basis.

These may be items the student hires or purchases, eg. materials for extra-curricular programs, or for activities the student purchases, eg. instrumental music tuition fees.

3. Voluntary Financial Contributions: the school may invite parents/ guardians to make donations for a specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, building/ library fund or general voluntary contributions. Not all donations are tax deductible.

The Principal must ensure that the school-level policy complies with the Department's policy. The Principal will also ensure that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it.

Implementation

- Each year the Finance committee will consider the level of fees and charges and make a recommendation to school council.
- Parent payments will only be set under the categories of Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.
- The school will ensure that parent payments are kept to a minimum and do not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.
- Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by late November of the previous year, along with the recommended payments schedule

- The payments schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, essential payment dates, clear definitions of the category of payment (i.e. essential, optional or voluntary).
- All communication with parents/ guardians regarding payment requests is fair and reasonable and invoices/ statement for unpaid essential or accepted optional items are not generated more than monthly.
- The school's Parent Payment policy will be available on the school website.
- Parents/ guardians will only be issued with the initial invitation and one reminder for voluntary financial contributions.
- General inquiries, questions or concerns can be directed to the Business Manager.
- Students are not to be denied access to the standard curriculum program, refused instruction or disadvantaged on the basis of payments not being made for education items or services.
- The school will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are strictly confidential.

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 eligible parents including:

- State Schools Relief Committee – clothing & uniform support
- Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) – provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports & excursions.
- Welfare support agencies
- School Wellbeing Coordinator

Parents/ guardians experiencing difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential student learning items will be supported and encouraged to contact the school's Business Manager, Jacqui Reffo on 9460 6995 to discuss in confidence alternate payment arrangements e.g. instalments.

Evaluation:

School Council has the responsibility and will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education. Change to the policy will be advised in the school newsletter with updated policy available on the school web site.

References

This Policy was developed in accord with the following documents:

- DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools
- DET Parent Payment Policy and Implementation
- DET Parent Payment policy
- Understanding Parent Payment Categories
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006

This policy was last ratified on 12 October 2016