Parent Payments and Contributions

CONTEXT
This policy is based on the Victorian Department of Education- Parent Payments Policy which was issued in conjunction with Circular S381-2007 on 16 October 2007.

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

AIM
School Council and the Finance Committee will ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education policy.

POLICY
All students will have access to the standard curriculum program.

Students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions.

The school will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment.

Categories
There are three parent payment categories which school councils can request payments from parents and carers:

1. Essential Education Items:
   o These are items which are essential to support instruction in the curriculum program.
   o Essential items include materials that the individual student takes possession of including text books and student stationery, art supplies and school uniform.
   o Parents and guardians must be given the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources.

2. Optional Extras:
   o These are items provided in addition to the standard curriculum program and are offered to all students. They 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.
   o Optional extras include instructional support material, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program, religious education
materials, camps and excursions, school-based performances, productions and events.

3. Voluntary Financial Contributions:

Schools may invite parents and guardians to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. These may include:

- Contributions to a building or library trust fund;
- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school e.g. garden maintenance levy;
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Communication

The school will provide parents with early notice of requests for payments of Essential Education Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions, i.e. a minimum of 6 weeks’ notice. Payment may be requested, but not required, prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Invoices requesting payment for unpaid essential education items may be sent once per year. Optional education items accepted by parents, are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.

The school may issue only one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.

Support Options

Parents who have difficulty paying for essential items are to be directed to a range of support options, such as:

- Camps, Sports & Excursion Fund (CSEF), which is available for eligible families, to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.
- Government funded programs (e.g.: Schoolkids Bonus, State Schools Relief Committee - see Financial Assistance for Families, State Schools' Relief - clk2sell Smartphone App )
- Child Care Benefit helps eligible families with the cost of outside school hours care, vacation care and registered care (see Centrelink: Child Care Benefit).
- Welfare and support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families.
Payment Arrangements and Non-Payment:
Parents and carers who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential education items, should be encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss the range of support options available and to negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement, such as payment by instalments.

Due to the differing financial circumstances of individual students and their families, the Principal may make decisions about non-payment of essential education items or optional extras on a case-by-case basis.

The Principal and School will ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by and parents and carers are confidential.

The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is deemed unacceptable and will not occur in any circumstances.

Under no circumstances will collectors of any type including debt collectors, be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

Parents and carers will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in optional extras such as an excursion or camp.

BREACH OF POLICY
As determined by School Principal.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS & RELATED DONBURN POLICIES
Donburn Primary School, Electronic Funds Management Policy.
Donburn Camps, Excursions & School Events Policy.

REFERENCES


DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Education Items</td>
<td>Items which are essential to support instruction in the curriculum program.</td>
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<td>Optional Extras</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary Financial Contributions</td>
<td>Voluntary donations, these may include library or building or general donations.</td>
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APPROVAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Person:</th>
<th>Policy Owner:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Donburn Primary School Council, Education Sub Committee</td>
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DOCUMENT CONTROL

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<th>Nature of Amendment</th>
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<td>New document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>Reviewed and ratified nil changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>Updated format and content to reflect the Victorian Department of Education policy.</td>
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