

## Parent Payment POLICY

### Policy Statement

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.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources. This, in turn, informs the parent payment charges approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

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.

### Our College will:

Adhere to the following principles:

- **Educational value:** Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent payment 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.
- **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.

- Ensure that no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

## **Implementation:**

### **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 parents 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 – Appendix A.

### **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 will 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.” \(See links\)](#)

There are a number of support options available for parents including but not limited to;

- Internal welfare support.
- A school operated second-hand book and uniform service.
- Camps, Sports & Excursion Funding (CSEF) available to eligible parents.
- State Schools Relief support available for uniforms/footwear/calculators/textbooks.
- Local community support.

Information regarding support options is available from any campus office and will be advertised periodically in the School Newsletter.

### **CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP**

Kurnai College understands that families may experience financial difficulties or hardship at times and may be unable to meet full or part payments requested. Families are invited to contact the campus office to make payment arrangements or alternatively can contact the College Student Finance Manager on 5165 0600 to discuss information regarding support options.

### **PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS**

Family Statements will be sent on a termly basis and we offer cash, cheque, eftpos, Bpay or credit card payment for either full or part payment of all levies.

Families are welcome to make payment plans through the Centrepay facility. Anyone receiving payments through Centrelink can sign up to automatically have fortnightly amounts deducted from their payments to cover material charges, camps or excursions. Forms are available from all campus offices.

From 2015 the Victorian State Government has introduced the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) to provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. Eligible secondary school students will receive \$225 per year. Payments will go directly to the school and be tied to the student.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

The Parent Payment Policy will be published on the School website and referenced in both the Parent Handbook and termly statements.

General enquiries regarding parent charges may be made to the Campus office. Any concerns should be directed to the College Principal or Business Manager.

### **PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES – 2020**

With increased Government funding, the College has been able to structure our budget so that families will pay no school levies in 2020. Kurnai we will endeavour to keep them free for as long as budget allows.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
<u>Essential Education Items</u>						
College Provided Texts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Locker Hire	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
College Events - Swimming/Athletics	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subject Materials	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<u>Optional Extras</u>						
Instrumental Music	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00
Instrument Hire	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
College Magazine	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
HOL	\$5 per session	\$5 per session	\$5 per session	\$5 per session		

### Voluntary

Building Fund

### Links

Costs Support for Families:

[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/PP\\_Costsupportforfamilies.docx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/PP_Costsupportforfamilies.docx)


DET

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx#link85>

### **Evaluation**

The Kurnai College Council will conduct an annual review of the Parent Payment Policy and review any concerns raised during the year from the community.

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<b>Date Implemented</b>	Week 3 – Term 1 – 2017 – V1
<b>Approval Authority (Signature and date)</b>	 11/2/2020
<b>Dates Reviewed</b>	Week 3 – Term 1 – 2018 – V2 Week 3 – Term 1 – 2019 – V3 Week 3 – Term 1 – 2020 – V4
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Productivity & Finance Committee
<b>Next Review Date</b>	Week 3 – Term 1 – 2021

# 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

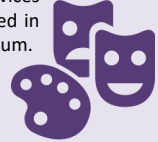


### Schools can request payment for Optional Items

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:



#### Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
  - school magazines, class photos
  - functions, formals, graduation dinners
  - materials for extra curricular programs
  - student accident insurance

#### Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
  - fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
  - fees for guest speakers
  - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
  - entry fees for school run performances

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.

#### Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
  - use of silver in metal work instead of copper
  - supplementary exam revision guides

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](http://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