



## White Hills Primary School Parent Payment Policy

### PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

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

Are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide. These items can include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery;
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. art items)
- netbook lease for students in Years 5 & 6

#### Optional education items

These can also be referred to as non-essential materials and services. These items are those 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 choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for each item. These items can include:

- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music,
- school-based performances, productions and events
- excursions and incursions including swimming
- additional school items such as student/ class photographs.

#### Voluntary financial contributions

Are those items and services under which parents are invited to donate to the School, for example for handyman/grounds person and school Council replacement of books.

*Please Note:* Student requisites contain high quality materials at a competitive price due to our relationship with the schools' stationery supplier. If parents choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school.

All administrative and financial processes are compliant with Department of Education and Training (DET) requirements, including CASES21 financial reporting.

### PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the academic year in which the materials and services are to be used. Pre-payment letters will be distributed prior to the end of the school year. Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

- Receipts/statement of payment will be issued to parents upon request.
- Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.
- Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians.
- All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

To further assist parents with payments, two payment options are available:

- Option A: Full amount payment
- Option B: Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss circumstances and available options.

- ❖ *Option C: In consultation with teaching and non-teaching staff, the Principal will discretely contact families who may be experiencing financial hardship to discuss support and special payment arrangements that can be made available to those needing additional assistance.*

## **FAMILY 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 parents, including:*

- *The Camps, Sports and Excursion fund (CSEF) supports families who meet eligibility criteria set by the Victorian Government to ensure the student has the opportunity to participate in important, educational and fun activities.*
- *The State Schools Relief Committee support, applications can be made via the Principal or Assistant Principal to assist with clothing/uniforms.*
- *The school is investigating the option of Regular Direct Debit from Centrelink paid to the school (Centrepay). Parents are able to arrange this through Centrelink. Please see office administration for set-up details.*
- *No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contributions.*
- *In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the School Council authorises the operation of a second-hand school uniform shop. The operation of the second-hand uniform shop is overseen by a uniform shop manager.*

## **CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP**

*Detail how the school will provide support to parents experiencing hardship, including:*

- *name and details of nominated parent payment contact person who parents can communicate with by phone, email or in person about their financial situation and related difficulties in making payments.*
- *the processes for meeting/communicating with parents experiencing hardship, including information to be provided*

## **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

- *All communication with parents or guardians about essential education items, including requests for payment, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letter and CASES 21 reminders for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following information:*

*Parents will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (a minimum of four weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year).*

- *Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable.*
- *If parents wish to raise any issues, make general inquiries about charges or make complaints please speak with the school principal.*

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

***This policy is reviewed annually by School Council to confirm/enhance internal control procedures. This policy is on the school's website.***

***Review Date: November 2017***