



PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Manor Lakes P-12 College

PURPOSE

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and to 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.

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.

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 for Extra-Curricular Items and Activities and invite parent payments for Curriculum Contributions and Other Contributions.

Curriculum Contributions (previously know as Essential Student Learning Items) support items and activities that help deliver fundamental curriculum or subject learning e.g. General classroom materials and equipment.

Other Contributions (previously know as Voluntary Contributions) support the school's operation and function more generally e.g. Parent communication tools and school building enhancements.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities (previously know as Optional Items) provide for items and activities over and above what is needed to deliver fundamental curriculum learning. These *user-pays* contributions enhance the school experience for students e.g. Optional camps, excursions and events.

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.

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
- **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
- contribution options are broadly itemised within the appropriate category
- 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 reasonable notice of any 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
- 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 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 Extra-curricular items and activity 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.

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](#).

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW



FREE INSTRUCTION

- Schools provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
- Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.



PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.

Other Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities

Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

- Schools may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices).



FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES

- Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn't miss out.
- Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.



SCHOOL PROCESSES

- Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.

PARENT PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- Please refer to the attachments on our website for each year level arrangements.
- These contributions allow our students to have an enriched learning experience and often take possession of items made in subjects such as woodwork, food technology and engineering.
- Every effort is made to keep the cost of extra-curricular items and activities to a minimum and affordable for all parents.
- Extra-Curricular items such as camps, excursions, sport, activities, school photos and instrumental music are available to students, but are not compulsory.

Student will not be disadvantaged in any way if parents do not make a voluntary contribution.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Compass, BPay, EFTPOS and Cash by arrangement due to COVID-19 restrictions. Secondary text books and whole school stationery payments can also be made via the Campion resource list.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

- CSEF
- State Schools Relief

Please contact the office to access our refund policy and application form. Alternatively this information is available on our website at www.manorlakesp12.vic.edu.au

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

Manor Lakes P-12 College understands that families may experience financial difficulty and offers families the opportunity to make an application for support with camps and excursions charges. We are also able to assist you with payment plans.

For a confidential discussion about accessing these services or if you would like to discuss alternative payment arrangements, please contact:

Burley Griffin Administration Office
Ph: 03 9741 4202 or email Manor.Lakes.p12@education.vic.gov

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

For a confidential discussion about accessing services or if you would like to discuss alternative payment arrangements, please contact:

Burley Griffin Administration Office
Ph: 03 9741 4202 or email Manor.Lakes.p12@education.vic.gov

Please refer to our website for more information and application forms.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

It is the responsibility of the school council to monitor the implementation of this policy, identify the factors/measures to be taken into account, such as transparency of processes and engagement with parents.

Date of approval by School Council October 2021

Due for Review October 2022