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|  | **TRARALGON SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL NO. 2114**  **Materials Charges and Payment Policy** |

# PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

Traralgon South Primary School ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances. It ensures 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.

# Purpose

* 1. To ensure parent payment practices are consistent and transparent
  2. To monitor and assess parent costs and payments.
  3. To provide a process for parents to meet responsibilities associated with payments to the school.
  4. To ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum
  5. To keeps costs to families to a minimum
  6. To minimise and manage outstanding debts.

# Principles

Traralgon South Primary School’s charges and payment policy will adhere to the following 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

# Parent Payment Charges

Traralgon South offers a broad curriculum and provides a range of extra-curricular activities. The school requests payment from parents for a number of reasons.

**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. Compulsory Materials Charges that contribute to the cost of student’s requisites include stationery, consumable materials used in the classroom, Art, Information Technology and photocopying. Activities associated with instruction that all student is expected to attend eg incursions, excursions, school sports and travel.

**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. These costs to parents are expected to be paid throughout the year and may include but are not limited to charges for activities and programs provided by outside specialists such as Life Education, swimming, art performances, music, school photographs, some camps and excursions.

**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 and maintenance, the provision of ICT equipment, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

# Parent Communication, Arrangements and Methods

* 1. The timeline below sets out the responsibilities of both parents and the school in relation to payment of the annual compulsory Materials Charge for every child attending Traralgon South Primary School. Payment of the Materials Charge can be made via cash, cheque, or online direct deposit.
     1. October (previous year)

School Council to set the Materials Charge for all students for the following year and parents will be notified of this decision in the next available newsletter. Parents are provided with early notice of annual payments for school fees (minimum of six weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year).This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.

* + 1. Beginning of Term 1 (current year)

Notice in newsletter requesting payment of Materials Charge for all students by the end of February. An outline of this Materials Charge will also be included. The Materials Charges will also be available on the school website

* + 1. End of February (current year)

Due date for payment of the Materials Charge for all students. Alternative payment arrangements may be made prior to this date.

* + 1. Start of March (current year)

Individual invoices to be sent out to parents who have not paid the Materials Charge or made alternative arrangements. A copy of this Policy to be enclosed with the invoice.

* + 1. Start of April (current year)

Principal to contact families who have not paid Materials Charges or made alternative arrangements and provide Family Support Options.

* + 1. There will be only one reminder notice to parents for voluntary financial contributions per year
    2. 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
    3. Any enquiries about charges, complaints or issues can be directed to the Principal

# Financial Hardship and Family Support Options

* 1. The school will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal or Business Manager.
  2. It is expected that parents will pay or make alternative arrangements with the Principal or Business Manager for all additional user-pay activities prior to children participating in the activity. It should be noted that Camps and Swimming charges must be paid prior to attendance unless alternate arrangements are made. Refer to Camps and Excursions Policy
  3. Parents who are experiencing hardship can contact the Principal about their financial situation and related difficulties in making payments. The Principal is able to use their discretion within the mandate of the policy and guiding principles to agree on the appropriate forms of assistance. For example but not limited to; waiving of fees, reduced fees, deferred payment or the

extension of payment deadlines or flexible payment plans beyond what’s available in the school’s standard policy.

# EVALUATION

* 1. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle. It is responsibility of the school council to monitor the implementation of the policy, identify the factors/measures to be taken into account, such as transparency of processes and engagement with parents, how/when it will be reported back to the school community, and timing and processes of review.