



TRARALGON SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

PURPOSE:

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and 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 parents¹ 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.

¹ Parent' in the policy has the same meaning as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

- **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.

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;
- 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 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."](#)

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](#).

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see: [Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

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

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.

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



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

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

POLICY:**1. Parent Payment Charges**

Within the comprehensive curriculum offered at Traralgon South Primary School, students consume items, activities and services which support the standard program. These items, activities and services are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum and are deemed compulsory. Traralgon South Primary School charges an Essential Student Learning Items levy for these items, activities and services.

We make every effort to keep the cost of materials and services low whilst maintaining a high level of education for our students. We do appreciate that some families experience difficulties in meeting payment requests and a range of support options are available to assist with this. Please make an appointment to discuss these options if required.

- a. Essential Student Learning Items:** This levy contributes to the cost of student requisites including stationary, bulk consumable materials used in the classroom, Athletics, Online literacy programs, Art materials, MAPPEN, printing and photocopying. This also includes activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend, such as incursions, excursions, school sports and travel.
- b. Optional Items:** These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay. 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, and some camps and excursions.
- c. Voluntary Financial Contributions:** These are presented each year to parents to target a school-based project. There is a suggested nominal amount per family, but all contributions are gratefully accepted, and parents are not pressured to contribute. Voluntary contributions can be made at any time of the year.

2. Payment Arrangements, Payment Methods and Communication with Families:

- a.** Payment of the Essential Student Learning Items levy can be made via cash or cheque at our General Office, Cheques should be made payable to *'Traralgon South Primary School'* unless otherwise advised. Unfortunately, we do not have EFTPOS facilities at the school, though payments can also be made via direct deposit to our school account below. Please also include a description of the related item you are making a payment for in the reference field. For example, *'Student name: 2020 School Fees'*

Account Name: Traralgon South Primary School

BSB: 313 140

Account Number: 12002290

- b.** The timeline below sets out the responsibilities of both parents and the school in relation to payment of the annual compulsory Essential Student Learning Items for every child attending Traralgon South Primary School.

i. October (Previous Year)

School Council to ratify the Parent Payments Policy 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), enabling parents to budget accordingly.

ii. Beginning of Term 1 (Current Year)

Notice in newsletter requesting payment related to Parent Payment Policy for all students by the end of February. An outline of the Parent Payments Policy will also be included, with a copy also made available on the school website.

iii. End of February (Current Year)

Due date for payment of the Essential Student Learning Items levy for all students. Alternative payment arrangements may be made prior to this date.

iv. Start of March (Current Year)

Individual invoices to be sent out to families who have not paid the Essential Student Learning Items levy or made alternative arrangements. A copy of this policy to be enclosed with the invoice.

v. Start of April (Current Year)

Principal or Business Manager to contact families who have not paid Essential Student Learning Items levy or made alternative arrangements, with family support options provided (CSEF, State Schools Relief, Local Community Support, second hand and low cost options).

Please note:

- There will be only one reminder notice to parents for Voluntary Financial Contributions per year.
- Invoices/statements for unpaid Essential Student Learning Items levy or Optional Items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.
- Any enquiries about charges, complaints or issues can be directed to the Principal or Business Manager.

3. Family Support Options and Consideration of Hardship:

- a. Traralgon South Primary School will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal or Business Manager.
- b. The Principal or Business Manager can be contacted by phone, email or in person about their financial situation and related difficulties in making payments.

- c. 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. Please refer to our Camps and Excursions Policy for additional information.
- d. Options to pay in instalments need to be discussed with the Principal or Business Manager.
- e. The Principal or Business Manager will provide families experiencing financial hardship information regarding Family Support Options (CSEF, State Schools Relief, Local Community Support, second hand and low-cost options)

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY:

It is the responsibility of the School Council to monitor the implementation of this policy, taking into account the transparency of the process and the engagement with parents each year. The School Council has the responsibility for reviewing the charges each year and producing a yearly payment schedule for parents.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 21 October 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2020.



PARENT PAYMENTS 2020

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We make every effort to keep the cost of materials and services low whilst maintaining a high level of education for our students. We do appreciate that some families experience difficulties in meeting payment requests and a range of support options are available to assist with this. Please make an appointment to discuss these options if required.

STUDENT NAME:	2020 YEAR LEVEL:	
ESSENTIAL STUDENT LEARNING ITEMS		LEVY
These are items or services that are essential for your child's education. The Department of Education and Training (DET) states that parents/guardians are expected to buy or supply these items. Traralgon South Primary School purchases in bulk, assuring discount prices are paid by families. There are also items that can only be purchased through the school.	This levy contributes to the cost of student requisites including stationery, bulk consumable materials used in the classroom, Athletics, Online literacy programs, Art materials, MAPPEN, printing and photocopying. This also includes activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend, such as incursions, excursions, school sports and travel.	\$160.00
OPTIONAL ITEMS		
These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay. 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, and some camps and excursions.	School Photos	To be advised
	Years 3 & 4 Camp	\$270 (Approx.)
	P-6 Swimming Program	To be advised
	Years 5 & 6 Camp	\$280 (Approx.)
	Other Sport and Excursion Costs	To be advised
VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS (per family)		Tick if paying
These are presented each year to parents to target a school-based project. Please note these are suggested amounts per family, but parents are able to contribute whatever amount they would like. Voluntary contributions can be made at any time of the year.	Grounds Maintenance The funding for the maintenance and upkeep of our school grounds is not fully provided by the DET, so contributions to this levy goes towards ensuring our grounds are maintained to a high standard.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20
	Information Technology (IT) The DET fund a limited amount of equipment, though contributions to this levy support our aim to provide optimum advantages to our students.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30
	Working Bee This voluntary contribution is intended to be a substitute for attendance at working bees throughout the year, supporting the maintenance of our school environment.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20

Timeline of Known Charges:

Term 1	28 February	Parent Payments 2020 due:	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential Student Learning Items Voluntary Grounds Maintenance Voluntary Information Technology Voluntary Working Bee 	\$160 per child \$20 per family \$30 per family \$20 per family
	March	School Photos	Costs depend on order
Term 2	April	Year 3/4 Camp	\$270 (Approx.)
Term 3	September	Prep-6 Swimming Program	To be advised
Term 4	November	Year 5/6 Camp	\$280 (Approx.)

Please note: During the year there may be additional costs related to activities associated with instruction.

Payment Options:

For your convenience, there are several options to make parent payments. These are:

- In person, at the General Office, using cash or cheque.
- Electronic transfer (direct deposit). Please include a description of the related item you are making a payment for in the reference field. For example, '*Student name: 2020 School Fees*', and complete and return the 'Direct Deposit Notification' slip below.

Account Name: Traralgon South Primary School

BSB: 313 140

Account Number: 12002290

Please note: If your family is experiencing circumstances which make it difficult to meet Parent Payments, please contact the school to discuss your options in a confidential manner.

DIRECT DEPOSIT NOTIFICATION

If you are paying for invoices and/or payments via electronic transfer (direct deposit), please complete the details below and return this to the General Office at your earliest convenience.

Name: _____

Date of Direct Deposit: _____

Amount: _____

Description of Payment(s): _____

Signature: _____