



Parent Payment Policy



Rationale:

The Education & Training Reform Act 2006 empowers school councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of free instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds.

Free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, resources, administration and facilities associated with the provision of the standard curriculum program.

School Council can request payments from parents/guardians for student materials and service charges, and for voluntary financial contributions.

These payments fall into three categories:

1. **Essential Education Items** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child. (eg. books, incursions/excursions and levies to support class programs)
2. **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in. (eg Swimming, Soundhouse Music Program, Camps)
3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school (eg. Grounds maintenance)

Aims:

For Footscray West Primary School, to provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing government funds with approved financial payments from parents/guardians.

Guidelines:

- A variety of extra- curricular activities will be offered to compliment the educational program and these will be provided on a user-pays basis.
- Where families have difficulty making payments, the Principal will discuss the range of support options available and negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement. All communication with parents/guardians will be confidential, fair and reasonable.

Implementation:

- The school will provide parents and guardians with early notice of requests for payment of essential educational items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks' notice will be provided to allow sufficient planning time.
- School council will determine the annual amount of payments
- Students who are new to the school or are leaving the school will be charged on a quarterly pro rata basis
- Details relating to all payments will be given with:
 - essential payment dates,
 - options to make payments by installments,
 - clear definition of the category of any payments
 - an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate)
- Payment arrangements will coincide with the timing of the availability of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) support for eligible parents/guardians
- Eligible parents/guardians can make a decision to sign over their EMA payment to cover Essential Education Items
- Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year must be returned to the parent/guardians unless there is an agreement that this money be carried over to the following year
- The school will only issue one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice
- Invoices for unpaid Essential Educational Items or Optional Items accepted by parents/guardians are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month
- Receipts will be issued for cheque and cash payments received
- A copy of the policy will be provided to all parents in annual information packs and the school web site
- The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to it
- School Council will review the level and purpose of payments and voluntary contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from DEECD.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year policy review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

April 2013