

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

Rationale:

The Education & Training Reform Act 2006 empowers school councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds. As the quality and variety of educational programs offered by our school are enhanced by doing so, our School Council requests payment from parents for essential student materials and service charges, and asks for modest voluntary financial contributions.

Aims:

To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.

Implementation:

School Council supplements Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items:-

1. **Essential Education Items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide i.e. stationery booklists, text books, art supplies, physical education equipment; computer equipment and uniforms etc.
 2. **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user pays basis and parents can choose whether or not their child participates i.e. instrumental music, camp
- In addition, School Council invites parents to make donations by means of:-
 3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which are non-compulsory donations for specific projects eg: library resources, grounds projects, or ICT equipment.
 - Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions **by December of the previous year.**
 - This information will include details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate), essential payment dates, clear definitions of the category of any payments (i.e.: Essential, Optional or Voluntary), and advice to parents to contact the office if they require additional information.
 - As with all parent payments to the school, Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements.
 - All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where payments have or have not been received will not occur.
 - All costs and processes associated with parent payments and voluntary contributions will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to DEECD requirements, and will be within the expectations of the school community.
 - Invoices for unpaid **Essential Items** and **Optional Extras** will be mailed monthly, with requests for **Voluntary Financial Contributions** to occur in February and July (if required) each year.
 - Designated office staff may contact a parent to remind them of overdue payments. If this is unsuccessful principal class members can make follow up contact. This contact can include phone calls, letters and personal contact if the parent is not returning messages.
 - Unpaid **Essential Items** payments will not result in any detriment by the school to the student.
 - Unpaid **Optional Extras** payments may compromise a student's ability to be involved in the optional activity in the future.
 - Unpaid **Voluntary Financial Contributions** do not constitute a non-payment and will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family.
 - No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents or students.
 - The principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to it.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed to reflect best practice.
- School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the DEECD.