



## **PARENT PAYMENTS**

### **Rationale**

- The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program (ie the eight key learning areas). It empowers School Councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and to raise funds.
- DEECD provides funding to schools through the Student Resource Package (SRP) and various programs. This includes funding for the standard curriculum program and associated education items, equipment and operational costs.
- Free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities required to provide the standard curriculum program.
- School Councils are responsible for developing and approving a school-level parent payment policy.
- There are three categories of payment – essential education items, optional extras and voluntary contributions.

### **Purpose**

- To ensure school-level parent payment policies and processes are compliant with the DEECD's policy requirements.
- To ensure Altona North Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

### **Implementation**

- The school will develop and implement a school-level parent payment system that ensures
  - all students have access to the standard curriculum program
  - it covers the three parent payment categories ie essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions
  - the school does not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment for any of the three categories
  - items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
  - cost is kept to a minimum
  - payment requests are be clearly itemised within each category
  - parents/guardians are given the option of purchasing equivalent essential education items themselves, in consultation with the school
  - students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, refused instruction or disadvantaged on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions. For example if parents/guardians choose for their children not to attend a compulsory excursion/camp an alternative option will be provided
  - the status and details of any payments or non-payments are confidential
  - parents are provided with early notice of payment requests (ie a minimum of six week's notice prior to the end of the previous school year)
  - payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used
  - school-level payments meet the community's expectations
  - invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents will be generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.
  - only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice per year will sent to all parents/guardians.
  - receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon payment and receipted on CASES 21.

- There will be a clearly articulated process for the administration of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA.). Payment arrangements will coincide with the timing of the EMA's availability but parents will not be pressured to sign over the EMA.
- Parents/guardians who have signed over their EMA cheque to the school should be informed that they have the option of providing essential education items themselves, can authorise the school to direct the family's EMA towards particular items and are entitled to know how the EMA is being used for their child's education.
- Upon request, the Principal will advise parents/guardians of the itemised cost of student materials and services on which they propose to spend the EMA.
- The EMA cannot be used to offset voluntary financial contributions. Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year must be returned to the parent unless there is agreement by the parent that this money can be carried over into the next year.
- The school will ensure that all communication with parents/guardians, including payment requests, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES21 invoices for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following information –
  - a description of each of the three parent payment categories,
  - details of what parents are being asked to pay for,
  - that parents are required to provide essential education items for their children, and have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate,
  - the availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the Principal if the parent wishes to discuss these.
- A copy of the school-level policy will be provided.
- School Council will endorse all parent payment requests.
- It is not acceptable to use coercion or harass parents/guardians to obtain payment.
- Under no circumstances will collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents/guardians.

### **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle or if guidelines change (latest update March 2014).

When First Developed / Reviewed – VRQA Minimum Standards: October 2013; May 2014

Reference:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx)