Flemington Primary School
POLICY FOLDER
ADMINISTRATION – Parent Payments Policy

Rationale
The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program in 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. 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, administrative 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 items, optional extras and voluntary contributions.

Purpose
- To ensure school-level parent payment policies and processed are compliant with the DEECD’S policy requirements.
- To ensure Flemington Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of Education and Training Reform Act.

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.
- Costs are kept to a minimum.
- Payment requests are to 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, service’s 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 payment or non-payments are confidential.
- Parents are provided with early notice of payments 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 be sent to all Parents/Guardians.
• Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon payment and receipted on CASES 21.
• There will be 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 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 payments requests, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES21 invoices for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following –
  □ 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 payments requests.
• It is not acceptable to use coercion or harass Parents/Guardians to obtain payment.

Evaluation
This policy will be reviewed as part the school’s triennial review cycle or if guidelines change.

Ratified in line with School Strategic Plan development - VRQA Minimum Standards: July 2014.

Resources and Links:
FPS Essential Education Expenses and Voluntary Contributions forms
FPS Student Booklist
FPS Personal Devices Parent Payment Policy
Parent Payment Categories Flowchart

What does free instruction mean?

The legislative requirements provide that instruction in the STANDARD CURRICULUM must be delivered free to all students in government schools.

The STANDARD CURRICULUM is curriculum that is assessed under the VELS, VCE, VCAL.

Does include:
- Science/subject where students can select from a range of different alternatives
- VET in Schools programs
- school sports
- camps/excursions and attendance at school performances, where the school deems such activity compulsory

Does not include extra-curricular activities
- i.e. dance classes

Legislative requirements of FREE INSTRUCTION also mean that schools cannot require parents to pay for:
- Instruction in the STANDARD CURRICULUM
- Instructional resources for the STANDARD CURRICULUM
- Instructional support for the STANDARD CURRICULUM
- Administration that is associated with the STANDARD CURRICULUM

such as instruction provided by visiting specialist or VET instruction
such as library resources, school nurses or first aid equipment
such as essential printing or photocopying
such as student cards or VET administration including
VET cluster administration

What may parents be asked to pay for?

There are 3 parent payment categories: essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions

Schools can:
- invite VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS for:
  - school grounds projects
  - library funds
  - new equipment

request payment for:
- OPTONAL EXTRAS
- These are items or services that are not essential to supporting the course of instruction in the standard curriculum and the school deems students may opt out of the activity or service
- These are items or services that are not essential to supporting the course of instruction in the standard curriculum and are items used as part of the standard curriculum

request payment for:

ESSENTIAL EDUCATION ITEMS

These are items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum. These are also items or services that the school deems compulsory. The items must also be either:

- Items the student consumes
- Items the student takes possession of
- Travel accommodation or entry fees

1. i.e. student accident insurance
   - subject fees for extra-curricular subjects such as instrumental music tuition
   - school magazines, graduation dinner, presentations, functions, school formal
   - recreational or non-school Internet use or printing
   - hire or lease of equipment not associated with the standard curriculum and not otherwise provided for by the Student Resource Package (such as dance classes)

2. i.e. travel and entry fees for:
   - school sports
   - swimming programs
   - camps
   - incursions

3. i.e. use of silver in metalwork instead of copper

Le.
- student handbook/day planner
- fees for guest speakers
- optional school camps
- lock (purchase or hire)
- lock hire
- entry fees for school run performances
- fees for performances or activities provided by outside specialists

Footnotes:
1. Costs that could be considered instruction, instructional support, instructional resources, instructional administration, or school facilities cannot be charged (i.e. consumable materials held by the school (other than cooking ingredients) and are required as part of the standard curriculum (such as paint, science, glue, laboratory chemicals, etc.).
2. Students should not be charged for materials they do not actually consume or take possession of.
3. "Incursions" are activities provided by outside specialists that are equivalent to excursions that are equivalent to excursions that are allowed at the school. When incursions are organised as part of the standard curriculum program, instruction is free and cannot be charged for. However, "entrance fees" for the use of the facilities or equipment may be charged for.