

# Mooroolbark East Primary School Parent Payment Policy

School councils are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in the three categories – essential education items, optional education items and voluntary financial contributions.

This policy ensures that:

- costs are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution
- access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.

Mooroolbark East Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.

Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this must be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

## Parent Payment Categories

**Essential education items** are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

These items include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. artwork, cooking)
- school uniform
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

**Optional education items** (or non-essential materials and services) are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents and guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- student computer printing for personal use
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes
- school-based performances, productions and events
- class photographs.

**Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents or guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust.

## Second-hand uniform shop

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the school operates a second-hand school uniform shop.

## **Other support options**

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist eligible parents,

- the Schoolkids Bonus which is provided by Centrelink to help with education costs and is automatically paid in January and July to eligible families and students.
- access to State Schools' Relief committee support via the principal to assist with uniforms, shoes, textbooks, stationery and software.
- the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, which is available for eligible families, to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.
- welfare and support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families.

## **Payment arrangements**

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year).

Costs will be kept to a minimum with payment requests/letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances if required.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional extras will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.