

EASTBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL Parent Payment Policy

Purpose:

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all students at Eastbourne Primary School have access to the standard curriculum.

Rationale:

Eastbourne Primary School works with the Victorian community sharing a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every student and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

We ensure that all students can access a broad range of learning opportunities that support their expectations and promote their aspirations as they move through the education system. Parent contribution, in all forms, assists Eastbourne Primary School to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by our school community.

What can schools charge?

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in government schools. School councils are responsible for developing and approving school-level parent payment charges and can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions: Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.

Other Contributions: Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.

Extra-Curricula Items and Activities: Items and activities that enhance and broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

The attached diagram "Parent Payment Policy Overview" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, Eastbourne Primary School must adhere to the following principles:

Principles

- **Educational value:** Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent payments practices
- **Access, equity and inclusion:** All students have access to the standard curriculum program and participation of all students to the full school program is facilitated
- **Affordability:** Cost to parents is kept to a minimum and is affordable for most families at the school
- **Engagement and Support:** Early identification and engagement strategies by the school ensure parents are well informed of the payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship
- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **Transparency and Accountability:** School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils

Cost and support to parents

Eastbourne Primary School Council ensures that costs are kept to a minimum and are affordable to most parents at the school.

Eastbourne Primary School Principal must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment requests are broadly itemised within the appropriate category
- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent Essential Student Learning Items themselves, in consultation with the school
- information on payment options is available, accessible and easily understood to all parents so that they know what to expect and what supports they can access
- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.
- parents are provided with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year- ensuring parents have a clear understanding of the full financial contribution being sought
- the status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel
- parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next
- use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted
- there will be only one reminder notice to parents for voluntary financial contributions per year
- Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

Support for families

Consideration of hardship

Parents/guardians, who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential education items, should be encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss alternative payment methods.

Eastbourne Primary School will make available a range of payment options for parents including payment plans. All payment plans must be finalised by the agreed to date.

Engaging with parents

School Council will engage in effective communication with the school community, have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of, and understand the needs and views of parents.

Review of policy implementation

Eastbourne Primary School will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated February 2024 and is scheduled for review in February 2025.

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY OVERVIEW



FREE INSTRUCTION

- Schools provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
- Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.



PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions	Other Contributions	Extra-Curricular Items and Activities
Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.	Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.	Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

- Schools may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices).



FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES

- Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn't miss out.
- Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.



SCHOOL PROCESSES

- Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.