



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Boneo Primary School on 5988 6253.

## PURPOSE

This policy outlines the ways in which School Councils can request financial contributions from parents and ensures that parent payment practices in schools are consistent, transparent and that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

## SCOPE

Schools and School Councils must adhere to the Parent Payments Policy which is outlined as follows.

## POLICY

Victorian government schools must 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 curriculum requirements in the 8 key learning areas as outlined in the Victorian Curriculum F–10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) (the Curriculum).

School councils may request parents make voluntary financial contributions towards the cost of schooling under 2 categories: Curriculum Contributions and Other Contributions.

School councils may invite parents to purchase Extra-Curricular Items and Activities – items, activities and services that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are additional to or outside of the school’s delivery of the Curriculum (including alternative forms of instruction). These are provided on a user-pays basis.

School councils may invite parents to supply or purchase their own educational items to use and to own. If a student does not provide or purchase their own educational items, the school must ensure the student has free access to what is needed at school to access the school’s delivery of the Curriculum.

Schools must follow the requirements on finance and communications set out in the guidance.

### Free Instruction

All students in Victorian government schools must have free access to instruction that is offered by a school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in the 8 key learning areas:

English

Mathematics

Sciences (including physics, chemistry and biology)

Humanities and social sciences (including history, geography, economics, business, civics and citizenship)

The arts

Languages

Health and Physical Education

Information and Communication Technology and Design and Technology.

## **Parent Payment Categories**

School councils may request parents make voluntary financial contributions and payments to the school under the following categories. There are no obligations on parents to make any voluntary financial contributions and schools cannot refuse students instruction in the curriculum if their parents do not contribute.

### **Curriculum Contributions**

Curriculum Contributions are voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum. Schools must be able to justify why an item or activity has been categorised as necessary to the school's delivery of the Curriculum.

### **Other Contributions**

Other Contributions are voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives. They can be requested for a broad area of school need or itemised for a clearly explained specific purpose.

### **Extra-curricular Activities**

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities are items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free in order to deliver the Curriculum. Extra-Curricular Items and Activities are provided on a user-pays basis. They include optional excursions and camps, optional sporting or music programs, and materials that don't relate to the Curriculum such as school magazines.

### **Purchase of educational items for students to own**

School councils may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and to own. If a parent does not provide or purchase their own educational items, the school must ensure the student has free access to what is needed at school to access the school's delivery of the Curriculum.

### **Financial Help for Families**

Schools have a commitment and responsibility to be responsive to parents who may be experiencing either short-term or long-term financial hardship.

#### **Schools must:**

- ensure costs to parents are kept to a minimum and made affordable for families
- consider the Financial Help for Families Policy and make arrangements for families who are experiencing financial hardship and unable to make payments for their child
- nominate a parent payment contact person(s) to support families with parent payment arrangements

Refer to [Financial Help for Families](#) for further information.

## Implementing the policy in schools

- Schools must:
- follow the finance requirements set out in the guidance
- follow the communication requirements set out in the guidance
- use the templates provided by the Department to create and communicate their parent payment arrangements
- follow all monitoring and compliance requirements as directed by the Department. Schools develop their parent payment arrangements to suit the contextual needs and aspirations of their school community while ensuring their arrangements remain in alignment with this policy.

### Schools must not:

- refuse instruction of the Curriculum to a student if parents do not make a parent payment or purchase any Extra-Curricular Items and Activities or their own educational items
- discriminate, harass or coerce parents or students in relation to payments
- approach students regarding any payments
- undertake debt recovery activities for any payments
- ask parents to pay for reasonable adjustments for children with a disability
- publish parent payment arrangements and school policies that are inconsistent with these requirements.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Parent Payments Arrangements (available on the School's website)
- Parent Payments One Page Visual (available on the School's website)
- Financial Help for Families Policy (available on the School's website)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	29 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Endorsed by	School Council 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Next scheduled review date	September 2025