



Date written/updated: 2017
School Council: 26th March 2018

Date reviewed: 2018
Next review: 2019

PURPOSE

This policy has been developed to provide information regarding parent/carer payments at Greenhills Primary School. The policy covers payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions that schools can request, following Department's policy requirements.

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

POLICY STATEMENT

Greenhills Primary School recognises that payments may be requested from parents/guardians for student materials, service charges and voluntary financial contributions used in the course of instruction and to raise funds. These payments fall into three categories:

1. **Essential Student Learning Items** are those items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are class materials that our school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of. Parents may choose to provide the materials themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate. (See Appendix A)
2. **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents/guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in, for example: Netbook Lease Program (Years 5 & 6), Religious Instruction, Instrumental Music Tuition, Choir Program etc.
3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions which parents/guardians are invited** to donate to the school:

Building Fund (Building/Hall maintenance & developments).

Note: The Building Fund donations are Australian Tax Office endorsed and are tax deductible.

Subject Contributions are raised for specific purposes identified by the school (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the Student Resource Package.

(See Appendix B for Understanding Parent Payment Categories)

IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The School Principal, as executive of Greenhills Primary School Council is responsible for the implementation and administration of Parent Payment Policy developed by the School Council, includes ensuring that the school-level policy is communicated within the school and that all staff are familiar with the policy and adhere to it.

Our School will:

- Provide parents and guardians with early notice of annual payment requests for payment of school fees for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.
- Give a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year to allow parents and guardians sufficient planning time. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the



commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used. Items that students consume or take possession of will be accurately costed.

- Provide 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.
- Ensure the availability of 'Camps, Sports, and Excursions Fund' is brought to the attention of families who may be eligible. CSEF information will be on the school website, published in the newsletter at the beginning of the school year and included with School Fees distribution annually.
- Not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions (see also section below on '**payment arrangements and non-payment**')
- Ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are confidential and only shared with relevant personnel.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

All communication with parents about education items, including requests for payment, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES 21 invoices for student materials and services charges must be accompanied by the following information:

- Parent/guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and they 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.
- Opportunities available for parents to raise any issues or make general inquiries about charges and the contact details where complaints can be referred to.
- Details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school.
- A copy of the school-level policy is available upon request.

SUPPORT OPTIONS

Our school will provide support for families experiencing financial difficulty through long term hardship or short term crisis by:

- The management of non-payment of essential education items or optional extras will be considered on a confidential, case-by-case basis.
- All parents being provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can communicate with by phone, email or in person about their financial situation and related difficulties in making payments.
- Appropriate alternative arrangements, such as payment by instalments will be available.
- Parents and guardians who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential education items, being encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal or other nominated senior staff member to discuss alternative payment methods.
- Engage with parents disconnected from the school who may be experiencing hardship by discretely approaching those families who may need support and special payment arrangements.
- Parents experiencing hardship not being pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next.



PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND NON-PAYMENT

This school will ensure that:

- Payment requests are itemized broadly within the appropriate category.
- Students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions.
- All students have access to the standard curriculum program.
- Parents and guardians are provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp.
- Invoices/Statements for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.
- An initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents and guardians.
- Under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.
- Any record of payments or contributions by parents and guardians is kept confidential. The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution will not occur in any circumstances.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Greenhills Primary School Parent Payment Policy will be reviewed at least annually as per School Council Policy and School Council will evaluate its relevance in line with community expectations as represented by parent members on School Council.

REFERENCES

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx>

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Payment Charges 2018

Appendix B - Understanding Parent Payment Categories



APPENDIX A – Payment Charges 2018

Essential Student Learning Items	Description	Year Level	Cost	
Includes a range of student essential items such as; Student stationery packs (includes writing books, scrap & exercise books, home reading book, scissors, crayons, assorted pencils, glue, sharpener, eraser and white board markers).	Student Stationery Pack	Level 1 (Prep)	\$73.00	
		Level 2 (Yr1&2)	\$57.00	
		Level 3 (Yr3&4)	\$91.65	
		Level 4 (Yr5&6)	\$100.95	
Other Essential learning items are; printed materials in lieu of textbooks, class room learning materials, specialist subject consumables such as specialised materials relating to the subject.	Other Student Learning Consumables	Level 1 (Prep)	\$180.00	
		Level 2 (Yr1&2)	\$182.00	
		Level 3 (Yr3&4)	\$175.00	
		Level 4 (Yr5&6)	\$140.00	
Excursions/Incursions; Year level activities related with instruction that all students are likely to attend.	Excursion Fee	Level 1-4	\$70.00	
		Level 5-6	\$90.00	
Swimming Program; Year level activities related with instruction that all students are likely to attend.		Level 1 (Prep)	\$95.00	
		Level 2 (Yr1&2)	\$75.00	
		Level 3 (Yr3&4)	\$75.00	
Interschool Sport Program		Level 4 only	\$150.00	

Optional Items; Activities/Programs the student/families choose to purchase	Description	Year Level	Cost
Choir Program		All	\$60.00
Netbook Program		Level 4 (5&6)	\$392.00
Team Sport Excursions		Level 3&4 (Yr3-6)	Varies
Instrumental Music Tuition		All	Varies

Voluntary Contributions	Financial	Description	All/Family	Cost
Subject Contributions	Voluntary		All	\$50-\$100
Building Fund Deductible)	(Tax		Family	\$50



APPENDIX B

Understanding Parent Payment Categories

Schools

What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability

Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

Parents

What may parents be asked to pay for?

Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
 - textbooks, activity books, exercise books
 - stationery, book bags
 - student ID cards, locks
 - cooking ingredients students will consume
 - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
 - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
 - excursions
 - school sports
 - work placements

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are **optional** and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
 - school magazines, class photos
 - functions, formals, graduation dinners
 - materials for extra curricular programs
 - student accident insurance

Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
 - fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
 - fees for guest speakers
 - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
 - entry fees for school run performances

Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
 - use of silver in metal work instead of copper
 - supplementary exam revision guides

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: www.education.vic.gov.au

Schools can invite **Voluntary Financial Contributions** for



- e.g.
 - Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
 - Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
 - General voluntary contributions