DE PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Weeden Heights Primary School

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school on 9802 0663 for support.

POLICY

This Parent Payments Policy outlines the ways in which schools can request financial contributions from parents and ensures that parent payment practices in Victorian government schools are consistent, transparent and that all students have access to the Curriculum.

SUMMARY

- 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 requirements of the Curriculum.
- Schools may ask parents to:
    - make voluntary financial contributions towards the cost of schooling under 2 categories: Curriculum Contributions and Other Contributions
    - purchase optional Extra-Curricular Items and Activities on a user-pays basis
    - to supply or purchase their own educational items for their child to use and to own.
- Schools must apply the Financial Help for Families policy when implementing the Parent Payments policy.
- Schools must follow the requirements on finance and communications set out in the Guidance tab.

DETAILS

Free instruction

All students in Victorian government schools must have free access to instruction that is offered by a school to fulfil the requirements of the Curriculum. This

includes the Victorian Curriculum F–10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), and the Victorian Pathways Certificate.

Free instruction includes the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the Curriculum, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

Schools must ensure that students have free access to items and activities as required for the school's delivery of the Curriculum. The extent and frequency of access that students require depends on the school's context and their approach to delivering the Curriculum.

Schools are not required to provide students with items to own, or keep, on a one-to-one basis. However, schools must determine appropriate resourcing to ensure students have access to the relevant items for the duration required to access the Curriculum.

Schools cannot refuse students instruction in the Curriculum or disadvantage students on the basis of financial contributions and payments not being made.

Principles of voluntary financial contributions

Schools seeking a parent payment must adhere to the following principles of voluntary financial contributions:

- the school council should clearly explain how contributions will be spent when making a request for a contribution
- each contribution is to be voluntary and obtained without coercion or harassment
- a student at the school is not to be refused instruction in the Curriculum because their parents do not make a contribution
- a student is not to be approached, coerced or harassed for contributions
- unless explicit consent to have contributions recognised is provided, any record of contributions is confidential, as is any decision by a parent not to make a financial contribution.

Parent payment categories

School councils may request parents to make voluntary financial contributions and payments to the school under the following categories.

Curriculum Contributions

Curriculum Contributions are voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum. As each school delivers the Curriculum based on their own local context, it is at a school's discretion to determine whether an item or activity is necessary for delivering the Curriculum. Schools must be able to justify why an item or activity is necessary to the school's delivery of the Curriculum.

Schools cannot refuse students instruction in the Curriculum or deny student access to items or activities on the basis of Curriculum Contributions not being made. Each student must have the same access to curriculum items or activities regardless of whether a student's parent has made a Curriculum Contribution.

Schools must provide a clear description of the item or activity when requesting Curriculum Contributions and allocate funds for the purposes for which they were requested. Schools do not need to itemise each individual item when requesting Curriculum Contributions.

Other Contributions

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

Schools cannot refuse students instruction in the Curriculum or disadvantage them in any way on the basis of Other Contributions not being made.

Other Contributions can be requested for a broad area of school need or a specific, clearly described purpose that relates to the school's functions and objectives. Schools must allocate funds raised from Other Contributions for the purposes for which they were requested.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities are items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are additional to or outside what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. As each school delivers the Curriculum based on their own local context, it is at a school's discretion to determine whether an item or activity is extra-curricular.

An item or activity can be provided on a user-pays basis and categorised in Extra-Curricular Items and Activities if it is not required for students to meet Curriculum outcomes or if there is a free standard activity available for students to participate in the Curriculum. Items or activities provided on a user-pays basis can still support curriculum-based learning; however, schools must be able to deliver the standard curriculum requirements to a student who does not participate.

Schools do not need to provide students with access to Extra-Curricular Items and Activities if payment is not received. However, schools cannot refuse students instruction in the Curriculum if payment is not received.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities must be specific, clearly described and identified as optional.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities can include:

- optional alternative forms of instruction
- optional non-curriculum-based school events (graduation)

- optional non-curriculum items (school magazines, yearbooks)
- optional excursions and camps
- optional sporting programs
- optional music programs
- optional out of school hours care
- optional items and materials that are linked to the Curriculum but are additional to or outside what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities must not include:

- items, activities, and services that are required to fulfil the Curriculum
- educational items such as headphones, stationery packs, digital devices, textbooks (including digital textbooks), calculators
- general enrolment fees
- subject enrolment fees (including VET courses and subjects defined by the school as 'elective')
- the hire, lease, or lease-to-own, of school owned digital devices.

Schools should ensure the cost of Extra-Curricular Items and Activities are kept to a minimum and made affordable for families. Schools must apply the Financial Help for Families policy in relation to Extra-Curricular Items and Activities to support families experiencing financial hardship.

Educational items for students to own

Schools can invite parents to bring from home, purchase, or lease educational items directly from third parties instead of using what is made available for free by the school. Educational items for students to own include items that have a specific curriculum purpose and for which students take individual possession. When inviting parents to purchase or lease educational items to own directly from a third-party provider, the school may include a list of recommended items or specifications.

Schools cannot communicate to families that parents must purchase educational items for students to own from third parties. If a parent does not provide or purchase educational items, the school must ensure that the student has free access to items as required for the school's delivery of the Curriculum. Schools are not required to provide students with items to own, or keep, on a one-to-one basis. However, schools must determine appropriate resourcing to ensure students have access to the relevant items for the duration required to access the Curriculum.

Educational items for students to own can include:

- textbooks (paper or digital versions)
- stationery
- calculators
- digital devices.

Educational items for students to own must not include:

- items not directly related to curriculum-based learning
- classroom consumables (including class materials such as food ingredients or art supplies that contribute to finished products that students take home)
- items that students do not take individual possession of (for example, class sets of devices, sports equipment, whole-school subscriptions)
- items that are developed and produced by the school (for example, school-developed workbooks, school-developed exam papers)
- activities or services (for example, camps, excursions, events, device repair costs).

Financial help for families

While all contributions are voluntary, schools must prepare for and support families experiencing financial hardship to facilitate student participation in the full school program (for example, purchasing Extra-Curricular Items and Activities and educational items for students to own).

Schools must:

- apply the Financial Help for Families policy to parent payment arrangements
- nominate a parent payment contact person(s) to support families with financial help arrangements and support programs.

Refer to Financial Help for Families for further information.

Implementing the policy in schools

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.

School's parent payment arrangements must:

- support the functions and objectives of the school, including the enhancement of student learning, access, equity, inclusion and wellbeing
- ensure costs to parents are kept to a minimum, affordable for families, and proportionate to the needs of the school
- 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.

School's must not:

- have parent payment arrangements that are inconsistent with the above requirements
- undertake debt recovery activities for any payments or contributions
- have a localised Parent Payments policy
- use terms, such as fees, charges or levies, which suggest or communicate that contributions are compulsory
- have parent payment arrangements that request payments for:
  - teacher professional learning
  - the provision of gifts, benefits or hospitality to school staff or school council members
  - items or activities that schools receive full funding for such as electricity, standard internet access and department provided administrative software.

RELATED POLICIES

- Digital Learning in Schools
- Finance Manual — Financial Management for Schools
- Financial Help for Families
- International Student Program
- Outside School Hours Care — Decision Making Regarding the Provision of OSHC
- Philanthropic Partnerships
- School Council — Powers and Functions
- Sponsorship
- Student Dress Code
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) Delivered to Secondary Students

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

CONTACTS

Schools

For support with the Parent Payments policy and your school's parent payment arrangements, you can contact your region's community liaison officer

Parents

For general queries about the Parent Payments policy you can contact the department's general enquiries line on 1800 338 663 or email enquiries@education.vic.gov.au

If you have any queries in regards to your school's parent payment arrangements please speak with your school first.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	16 February 2026
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	2027

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

ONE PAGE 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 requirements of the Curriculum. This includes the Victorian Curriculum F-10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) including the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate.
- 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.