



ASPENDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Rationale:

This policy covers payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions that schools may request, and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

Context

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* ensures the provision of free instruction in the **standard curriculum program**, and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and to raise funds. Free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities associated with the provision of **the standard curriculum program**. The standard curriculum program includes core learning and teaching activities associated with AusVELS.

Aims:

School councils can request payments from parents for student materials and services charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:

1. **essential education items** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. stationery, text books, ICT infrastructure and school uniforms where required);
2. **optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. school magazines, extra curricular programs or activities);
3. **voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school.

Implementation:

Our policy on essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions ensures that we:

- provide parents and guardians with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks notice should be given 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
- provide the option to parents of a payment plan and parents encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal and Business Manager to discuss circumstances and available options at the beginning of the year.
- determine the cost of levies each year to ensure that the School does not make a profit or a loss from the essential educational items and the optional extras
- 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
- ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are confidential.

- If in the situation where a non-standard curriculum program has not been paid students will not participate in activities (eg. interschool sport, excursions, incursions, swimming, camp).
- The option of a payment plan is offered for high cost non-standard curriculum programs such as camps.

Our School must ensure that:

- 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 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
- only the 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.
- where essential educational items have been purchased on behalf of the student and remain unpaid by the parents/guardians, the school will endeavour to provide a financial agreement plan suitable to the financial needs of the parents/guardians to assist with this payment.

Payment requests or letters to parents must clearly identify which category the items fall into, i.e. essential education items, optional education items or voluntary financial contributions.

Schools may issue only one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice. The school relies on the continued financial support of its community.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

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