

# Glen Iris Primary School

## PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

### RATIONALE

The Victorian community shares a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Schools are best placed to make local decisions which 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 contributions, in all forms, assists schools to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by school communities.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources. This, in turn, informs the parent payment charges approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

### PURPOSE

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

### DEFINITIONS

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 payments from parents under three categories only:

- Essential Student Learning Items
- Optional Items
- Voluntary Financial Contributions
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**Essential Student Learning Items** are those items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of. Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.

These items include:

- Materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery
- Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. home economics, photography, catering)

**Optional Items** are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them.

These items include:

- Student computer printing for personal use
- All camp, excursions and incursions
- Extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes
- School-based performances, productions and events
- School magazines, class photographs

## Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, building fund, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

### 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 council.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Glen Iris Primary School Council will ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment requests are 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).
- 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**

Glen Iris Primary School appreciates that some families may experience financial difficulties from time to time. A range of support options, including the State Schools Relief Committee and the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF), will be available to assist eligible families. Details will available on the school website and the school office.

All parents are provided with the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with. Special arrangements will be made for any family seeking assistance.

## **EVALUATION**

*This policy will be reviewed as part of the GIPS annual review cycle.*

*To be ratified by School Council at the November Meeting 2017.*

*Next review November 2018.*