

Dear families,

Soon you'll receive a letter from the school about Parent Payments for 2024.

The Department of Education requires schools to seek these as voluntary financial contributions. In practice, we rely on Parent Payments to deliver quality education and create an effective learning environment.

Parent Payments fund:

Curriculum consumables like paper, pencils, printing, photocopying, art supplies; plus **wellbeing resources**

Library and digital resources: books, contemporary readers, online learning subscriptions and bringing iPads and laptops up to date so they can run the latest applications

Enhanced environment: maintaining and enhancing our indoor and outdoor learning environments, to make the school safe and welcoming for all

Some of these contributions are tax deductible.

You'll see in the formal school communications a deliberate effort to provide greater visibility of what the payments fund, so you can see how essential they are.

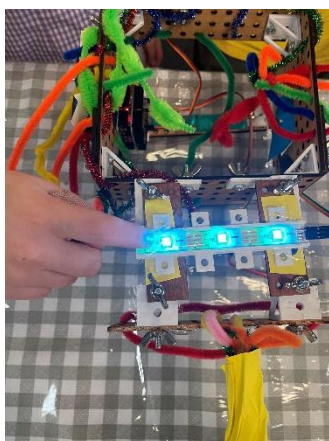


Why they're so important

Government funding covers core teaching and learning, leadership, teaching support, professional development, relief teaching, payroll tax and superannuation. GIPS receives the lowest level of government funding due to our high socio-economic SFOE index.

In the past at GIPS, almost every family paid the full amount. Since the change in government wording from 'fees' to 'voluntary contributions', we've seen a steep decline. Contributions in 2023 were significantly lower, which made it very challenging and tested our ingenuity to continue to deliver the high quality of education our children deserve.

We spent some of our modest financial reserves in our Building Fund this year on necessary and overdue repairs, and you can see for yourselves around the school there is much more we need to do, to recover from lost momentum during the covid years and school leadership changes.



2024 considerations

We are actively planning and budgeting for a bright 2024:

- We are on the cusp of appointing a permanent Principal, and expect to announce the outcome in coming weeks.
- We can already announce that we will introduce STEM Design Thinking as a new specialist class.
- Our Inclusive Schools grant application has progressed to the next stage, so whilst there's no outcome yet, we remain cautiously optimistic for our inclusive playground.

After careful consideration of our students' needs and of increasing costs, we'll need to increase the Parent Payments for 2024. Please be assured that in making this decision, we were very mindful of the cost pressures all families are already experiencing.

We also sense-checked against comparable schools:

| Parent payments comparisons | GIPS | Canterbury | Greythorn | Hartwell | Unnamed comparable school |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Non tax-deductible | ~ \$ 401 (varies by year level) | \$736 | \$480 | \$570 | \$506 |
| Tax deductible | \$ 300 | \$75 | \$150 | Not specified | \$ 350 |
| Total | \$701 | \$811 | \$630 | varies | \$856 |

At under \$15 per week, we trust you'll agree this still represents the best value education in Victoria.

Your options and support

We fully appreciate that some families may not be in a position to contribute. We sincerely hope that those who can, will.

The requested payment amounts will appear in Compass by default. You can alter these amounts to suit your family: if you cannot contribute the full amount, please pay what you can. If you can give more, please consider doing so. Either way, please know that every cent will make a difference.

Flexible payment options are also now available to all families, so if term-by-term or even week-by-week payments would be more manageable, please look for this information in the formal school communications.



If you have queries or concerns, we encourage you to raise these with us via Kirsty.Watts@education.vic.gov.au.

Thank you in advance for enhancing education beyond the bare minimum... it makes *all* the difference. With your crucial contributions, a new specialist class, and a permanent Principal in place, 2024 is going to be a great year for GIPS students. **Together, let's Aim High!**




Kirsty Watts
President



Jon Vains
Vice President



Tristan Schmidt
Treasurer

on behalf of your School Council