



PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the school level payment and processes are compliant with DEECD policy requirements.

The Department provides funding to schools through the SRP (Student Resource Package) and various programs. This includes funding for the standard curriculum programs and associated educational items and operational costs.

Free instruction includes learning, instructional support, materials and resources, administration and facilities to provide the standard curriculum program. The standard curriculum program includes core learning and teaching activities associated with the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS).

RATIONALE

- The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 empowers School Councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds. As the quality and variety of educational programs offered are enhanced, School Council request payment from parents for certain materials and service charges, and the offer of modest voluntary financial contributions.

AIM

Our aim is to provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payment from parents.

The policy at Watsonia Heights Primary School is to ensure that all students have access to the standard curriculum program, that no student is treated differently or disadvantaged in any way and the school does not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year as a condition of payment of any of the following 3 categories.

IMPLEMENTATION

School Council supplements DEECD funds by requesting payments from parents which will cover the following three areas:

1) Essential Education Items.

These are items which parents pay the school to provide (or may provide themselves) if appropriate and are essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program.

These include:

- Materials that the students take possession of such as text book and students stationary.

- Materials for learning and teaching where the students consumes or takes possession of the finished items eg, Cooking, science, art.
- Items associated with but not part of instruction in the standard curriculum standard program such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.
- School Uniform where applicable.

2) Optional Extras.

These are items provided in addition to the standard curriculum program and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user pays basis and if parents choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them. These items include:

- Instructional support material, resources and administration in addition to the standard curriculum program (eg personal use computer printing)
- Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program. Eg Instrumental Music, Choir, Gardening Club.
- School Based Performances, productions and events.

- Materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable. (eg the use of more expensive materials).
- School facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program eg student accident insurance, hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments.

3) Voluntary Contributions.

Parents/guardians or anyone else, can be invited to make a donation to the school for the following purposes:

- Contributions to a building trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund . (These are the only 2 funds approved by the ATO and are tax deductible).
- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (eg materials equipment or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers or student related-services.
- General Voluntary Contribution to the School.

Costings:

Every effort must be made by the school administration to ensure that all costs are kept to a minimum and that items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed. Quotes for all costs associated with Essential Educational Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Contributions for the following year are to be sought and costings finalised by early October so that Parent Payment Notices and Information may sent home in October/November to allow parents the time to plan ahead with their budgets. The information sent

home to parents/guardians must have a description of each of the payment categories and itemised details of what the parents are being asked for, the availability of the Payment Plans offered as detailed below and a copy of the school level policy.

Parents are also to be advised that they are responsible for providing essential items for their children, and have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate.

Note: *If parents/guardians choose to provide equivalent materials themselves, this should be done in consultation with the school, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school. However, there are some items (eg food provisions for cooking classes,) which, due to their nature, can only be provided by the school.*

Payment Plans:

To further assist parents/guardian to make it easier for them to budget and pay for their Payment Contributions, Watsonia Heights Primary School offers all families the options of paying by one of the following plans:

- a) Fortnightly.
- b) Monthly.
- c) Termly.
- d) In Full (with an Early Bird Discount if paid by End of Term 4 in previous year)

Confidentiality and Sensitivity:

Parent payment details MUST be treated confidentially and no discussions are to be held with any students in relation to this matter. The public notification of students and/or their guardians financial situation is unacceptable and MUST not occur under any circumstances. It is not acceptable to use coercion or harass parent/guardians to obtain payments.

Invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by the parents are to be generated and distributed on a regular basis but not more than once a month. Only the initial request for Voluntary Contributions and one reminder notice per year is to be sent to parents/guardians.

The Principal and Business Manager must exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of individual students and their families. The Principal and Business Manager are encouraged to make decisions about how to manage non-payment of essential education or optional extras on a case by case basis.

Where families are experiencing difficulty making payments, the Principal or Business Manager are expected to discuss with them a range of support options available, and to negotiate an alternative arrangement such as a change in Payment instalments. Parents/guardians who are experiencing difficulty should be encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal or Business Manager to discuss alternative payment methods and to advise parents of assistance which may be available. (such as State Schools Relief, Welfare and Support Agencies etc)

ADMINISTRATION

Administrative and financial processes must be compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 Reporting. CASES 21 Receipts are to be issued immediately payment.

No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents/guardians or students.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle. School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Ratified by School Council: 2014