



Parent Payment Policy and Implementation

Purpose:

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

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 contribution, 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.

What can schools charge for?:

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 parents¹ under three categories only- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

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.

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.

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, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

¹ Parent' in the policy has the same meaning as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

The attached diagram "**Understanding Parent Payment Categories**" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

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 councils

Cost and support to parents:

When school councils consider the proposed requests for parent payments the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school.

School principals must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment requests are broadly 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). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.
- 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:

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. Principals and school councils exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents. These can be accessed through [“Cost support for families.”](#)

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/PP_Costsupportforfamilies.docx

Consideration to hardship arrangements in respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis. All schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty. All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.

Engaging with parents:

In respect to each school’s development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

Review of policy implementation:

Schools will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department’s [School Policy and Advisory Guide](#).

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx>

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see: [Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/PP_FAQforparents.docx

Understanding Parent Payment Categories

Schools

What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability

Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

Parents

What may parents be asked to pay for?

Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
- textbooks, activity books, exercise books
 - stationery, book bags
 - student ID cards, locks
 - cooking ingredients students will consume
 - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
 - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
- excursions
 - incursions
 - school sports
 - work placements

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are **optional** and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:



Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
- school magazines, class photos
 - functions, formals, graduation dinners
 - materials for extra curricular programs
 - student accident insurance

Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
- fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
 - fees for guest speakers
 - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
 - entry fees for school run performances

Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
- use of silver in metal work instead of copper
 - supplementary exam revision guides

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: www.education.vic.gov.au

Schools can invite **Voluntary Financial Contributions** for



- e.g.
- Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
 - Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
 - General voluntary contributions

Parent Payment Charges*

1. Essential Student Learning items

These are items, activities or services that MPPS deems **essential** to student learning of the standard curriculum.

These items include:

- Items the student takes possession of (i.e. stationery (including paper), school computers/ notebooks, class resources,).
- Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend (i.e. Physical Education, Arts (Performing & Visual), Science, etc.).

2. Optional items

These are items, activities or services that are optional and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum. Students may access these on a user-pay basis.

These may be either:

- Items the student purchases or hires (i.e. eConnect- Netbook, Moonee Vale Instrumental Music Program, etc)
- Activities the student purchases (i.e. Chees, Club, Fencing Club, etc)

3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school. Examples of these include the Building Fund, Library Fund. Voluntary Financial Contributions are reviewed annually by School Council in line with the approval of the Parent Payment forms and may change based on the strategic and operational requirements of the school.

Library Fund

This fund is tax deductible.

Funds donated for the Library Fund will be used to replace and supplement the school and classroom library books. It will also be utilised to improve the library space for all students and teachers to use. Each year many books from the library and classroom borrowing books become damaged and need to be replaced.

Building Fund (replacing the Building & Facilities Voluntary Contribution)

This fund is also tax deductible.

Funds donated for the Building Fund will go to improvements highlighted by the School Council Facilities committee. This can include floor coverings, painting, signage and other building improvements.

Working Bee

This voluntary fee has been created in lieu of attendance at a working bee.

*Please refer to the 2017 Parent Payment forms in appendix 1

Payment Arrangements and Methods

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To assist parents with payments, three payment options have been developed:

Option A	Full amount
Option B	Instalments
Option C*	Alternate payment arrangements as per arranged with the school

**Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.*

Payments can be made in a range of ways. These include cash (in a sealed envelope), EFTPOS (Debit or Credit Card), BPAY or Cheque. Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment or send home via their child.

Family Support Options

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist parents.

These include:

Uniforms

Second hand uniform shop

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the school operates a second-hand school uniform shop. Our school Parents Association coordinates this, please contact the school office for details on access.

State Schools Relief Fund (SSRF)

SSRF may cover the cost of new uniforms, shoes, books and more for disadvantaged students. State Schools' Relief only respond to request from school principals. Parents and Carers who are struggling need to make an appointment with the school to discuss their situation.

<https://www.ssr.net.au/schools>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/stateschoolsrelief.aspx>

Books and Stationery

Booklist

The school utilises a low cost supplier that has lower prices due to their large quantity of purchases. Parents are welcome to source similar cheaper options if wanted.

Camps, Sports, Excursions & Incursions

Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF)

This is a Victorian Government allowance for parents of eligible students attending MPPS who are recipients of a Health Care card. This allowance is paid to the school of eligible students in Foundation – Year 6 as follows: \$125.

Consideration of Hardship

Should families experience hardship they are invited to discuss this with the school principal by phone, email or in person. This discussion process is confidential. Please note the school principal may discretely approach families who may need support and special payment arrangements.

Communication with Families

Each November the Parent Payments policy will be updated and published on the school website (www.mpp.vic.edu.au). Parent Payment notes (for each year level) will be forwarded to families through the students. These documents will also be included in the Parent Download section of the website.

Any inquiries regarding parent payments should be addressed to the School Principal or the President of the School Council.

Monitoring and review of the implementation of the policy

School Council (through the Finance Committee) will monitor and review the implementation and processes outlined in this policy on a yearly basis from August - October. Information regarding changes and alterations will be forwarded through a letter to parents and through the school newsletter in November each year.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/PP_Parent-Payments_diagram.pdf

Evaluation: This Policy will be evaluated on an annual review cycle.

Key Person responsible for development of this policy: Principal

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	MAR 2017	
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Appendix 1

2017 Parent Payments

The following information for parents relates to the Parent Payment Form over the page. Please read this section first. Parents are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the MPPS Parent Payments policy that has been updated since the DET made changes in 2016. www.mpp.vic.edu.au/school-council/school-policies/

The payment of the fees can only be done through the office (EFTPOS, credit card, cash) or through BPAY using your individual biller code (please see the office if you need these details).

Please note that payments can be made at the office from 8th November, 2016.

The school will again offer a three step payment plan to make it easier for families to make the payments. Alternatively there is a due date highlighted for all payments to be finalised if paying the total amount in full. Our goal is to highlight all the costs for your child's education for the year (for the relevant grade level). This will allow you to plan for costs in advance.

Essential Education Items

Money collected enables the school to purchase vital materials and resources which will be utilised by all students to enhance their learning across all year levels and specialist areas within the school. The Essential Education Items are associated with, but are not part of the 'instruction' in the standard curriculum program for your child. The cost for each child is \$170 per year. This figure is capped at \$340 total per family. Therefore families with three or more children at MPPS receive a discount.

Excursion Levy

In 2017 the excursion levy will be \$100. This should cover all excursions and incursions which will also include the athletics, cross country and swimming carnival attendance costs. Teachers in each year level aim to include all extra curricula activities within this \$100, however there may still be additional costs that will be requested. For example- the Prep- 2 BBQ & Year 2 sleep over. When there is a cost outside the excursion levy, this will be outlined in the excursion note sent home at the time of the activity.

Swimming Program (Prep- grade 4)

The cost for this school program is included; parents can pay this figure now or later in the year before the program actually starts. *Please note the cost of the program will remain the same throughout the year.*

Voluntary Contribution Funds

These voluntary funds are vital to ensure the school continues improving the facilities and resources. We recommend \$50-\$100 for each fund; however any donation will be appreciated.

- **Library Fund**
This fund is tax deductible.
Funds donated for the Library Fund will be used to replace and supplement the school and classroom library books. It will also be utilised to improve the library space for all students and teachers to use. Each year many books from the library and classroom borrowing books become damaged and need to be replaced. Our aim is to have \$10,000 for these important resources.
- **Building Fund (replacing the Building & Facilities Voluntary Contribution)**
This fund is also tax deductible.
Funds donated for the Building Fund will go to improvements highlighted by the School Council Facilities committee. In 2017 this includes floor coverings, painting, signage and other building improvements. Our aim is to have \$10,000 for these important resources.
- **Working Bee**
This voluntary fee has been created in lieu of attendance at a working bee. There will be three working bees in 2017: Sunday 26th February, Sunday 28th May and Sunday 27th August.

Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF)

Parents holding a valid means-tested concession card will be eligible to apply. A special consideration category will also exist.

- Eligible families will need to apply for the CSEF at their child's school with applications to be entered by school administrators onto a web-based system.
- A payment of \$125 for primary school students (\$225 for secondary school students) will be paid directly to the school to be used towards camps, sports and excursion costs for the benefit of the student.

The school has payment plans for parents to follow if needed. Any questions regarding financial assistance or other issues please see the Principal/ Assistant Principal.

Please complete a Parent payment Form for each child you have at MPPS, as each year level has different costs.

PAYMENT CAN BE PROCESSED FROM 8th NOVEMBER, 2016.

This document and Parent Payment Form can also be found on the school website in the parent download section (Remember the password is: mpps).



Moonee Ponds Primary School

respect • optimism • care • collaboration

2017 Parent Payment Charges and Return Form

Moonee Ponds Primary School makes every effort to keep the cost and number of items that need to be purchased to a minimum. We also try to ensure that the costs are affordable for all parents. We guarantee that any information about your financial circumstances, payment arrangements or status will be kept strictly confidential.

Please bring this completed form with you when making payment in person.

NAME OF STUDENT: _____

Year Level: _____

School Fees

Item	Cost	Total
<u>ESSENTIAL STUDENT LEARNING ITEMS</u> Money collected enables the school to purchase vital materials and resources which will be utilised by all students to enhance their learning across all year levels and specialist areas within the school. The Essential Student Learning Items are associated with, but are not part of the 'instruction' in the standard curriculum program for your child.	\$170.00 (Capped at \$340 per family)	\$170.00 OR \$70 (if deposit paid on enrolment)
<u>Excursion Levy</u> (This can be used to pay for all year level excursions/ incursion, sports carnival days and other events)	\$100.00	\$100.00
<u>Swimming Program – Prep to 4</u>	\$85.00	\$85.00
<u>Sub Total</u>		\$355.00 OR \$ _____
<u>(Please amend on the blank line if different to the sub total suggested)</u>		

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Item	Cost	Amount to be paid
Library Fund*	\$Voluntary Amount	\$ _____
Building Fund*	\$Voluntary Amount	\$ _____
Sub Total		\$ _____

*Tax Deductible

Working Bee - in lieu of attendance at a working bee.	\$50.00
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TOTAL FEES PAYABLE	\$ _____
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Please return this form, along with the parent payment options form to the school office.

PARENT PAYMENTS OPTION FORM:

Please indicate your preferred method of payment:

Option A (Full Amount)*

*Full Amount payable from 8th November, 2016 until 24th February 2017.

Option B (Three Instalments)

Dates for the three instalments as follows:

1. 25th November, 2016
2. 16th December, 2016
3. 10th February, 2017

Payment via Credit Card, Cash, Cheque or BPAY:

Credit Card payments may not be processed on the instalment date due to the large volume of payments to be processed.

I wish to pay by: Cheque** Cash Credit Card

BPAY

Type of Credit Card: MasterCard Visa

Card Number: / /

Expiry Date: / 20

I authorise by signing below that the following amounts to be deducted from the credit card details above.

Option B (Instalments)

I authorise by signing below that the following amounts to be deducted from the credit card details above.

1. 25th November, 2016 \$ _____
2. 16th December, 2016 \$ _____
3. 10th February, 2017 \$ _____

Cardholder's Name (Please Print)

Signature:

Student's Name	Year	Description of payment	Total***

Please Note: Additional School Charges may arise during the year.

**Please make cheques payable to Moonee Ponds Primary School

*** Instalment total (option B) or overall total (option A) depending on your preferred method of payment.