



# Parent Payments Policy

## Purpose

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This policy provides information for the school community regarding parent payments at Upper Yarra Secondary College. This policy covers payments for essential education items, (course based fees), optional extras, (year level based fees) and voluntary financial contributions that our school requests and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests will be made. This policy complies with the requirements of the DEECD Parent Payments Policy.

## Context

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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, which includes core learning and teaching activities associated with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

All students will have access to enrolment, advancement to the next year level, the standard curriculum program and receive instruction and services. An alternative option will be provided for students if their parents choose for them not to participate in an incursion, excursion or camp.

## Categories of Parent Payments

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School Council requests payments from parents for student materials and services charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories: Their specific duties include:

### Essential Education Items

Essential education items are those items used in the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

These items include:

- Materials that the individual student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery
- Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finalised articles (e.g. cooking, arts, photography, food technology,);
- School uniform
- Essential services associated with, but not considered to be a part of, instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps, excursions, which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).

## Optional Extras

Optional extras (or non-essential materials and services) are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents and guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- Instructional support material, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program (e.g. student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use,)
- Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music tuition)
- 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 (e.g. the use of more expensive materials)
- Materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. school magazines)
- School facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the Student Resource Package (SRP) (e.g. student accident insurance, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).
- iPad configuration and Network Access Fee

## Voluntary Financial Contributions

School councils may invite parents and guardians of a student enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:

- Contributions to a building and grounds fund or contributions to a chaplaincy fund (these trust funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax deductible)
- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers or student-related services
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

## Implementation

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The Principal is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Upper Yarra Secondary College Parent Payment Policy developed by school council.

### The School Principal will:

- Advise parents/guardians of the parent payment schedule as close as possible to the beginning of term 4 in the year preceding payment.
- Provide a minimum of six weeks' notice to parents/guardians before payment is required.

- Endeavour to match payment arrangements to coincide with the timing of the availability of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The School's portion will not be used to offset voluntary financial contributions.
- Ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents/guardians are strictly confidential.
- Inform parents/guardians of alternative payment options and invite parent/guardians to contact the Principal if they wish to discuss these options.
- Ensure parents/guardians are aware of support options such as EMA and the School Start Bonus.
- Ensure all requests for payment are fair and reasonable.
- Not withhold access to the standard curriculum program and enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment.
- Provide details of how payments will be spent by the school.
- Ensure that payment prior to the commencement of the year may be requested but not insisted on.
- Ensure parents/guardians are not harassed or coerced to obtain payment.
- Ensure invoices for unpaid essential educational items or optional items accepted by parents/guardians will not be sent more than once a month.
- Ensure collectors of any type, including debt collectors to obtain any funds from parents/guardians will not be used under any circumstances.
- Ensure only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents/guardians.
- Ensure the Parent Payment Policy complies with the requirements of DEECD.

### The School Council will ensure that:

- The Parent Payments policy is reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle.
- The Parent Payments Schedule is reviewed and endorsed annually, however no later than September of the year preceding the year of the required payments.
- The parent payments are kept to a minimum and will not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.

### The Parents/Guardians will ensure that:

- Essential education items are provided for their child/ren.
- The Principal or Business Manager is contacted to discuss alternative payment options if required.

For further information, please refer to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines: *'Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools.'*

# Evaluation

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This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

<b>Author:</b>		
<b>Ratified By:</b> UYSC School Council		
<b>Name:</b> Michelle Mock President	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Date Implemented:</b>		
<b>Date Updated On-Line:</b>		
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Responsible for Review:</b>	
<b>References:</b>		

Dear Parent/Guardian

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* provides that instruction in the standard curriculum program is delivered free to all students in Victorian Government schools, this is referred to as 'free instruction'. The Act also grants school councils the power to charge fees for goods and services to support the delivery of free 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 related to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and senior secondary certificates such as VCE and VCAL including VET in Schools programs.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools policy provides advice on the different types of payments that schools may request from parents and outlines the procedures and protocols schools must adhere to.

School councils are responsible for developing and approving a school-level parent payment policy that is compliant with the Department's policy.

There are three areas for which parents may reasonably be requested to make a payment or contribution:

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

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children are provided with essential educational items. The school makes every effort to keep the cost of items that need to be purchased at a minimum. Parents also have the option of providing essential education items themselves.

Alternative payment options are also available through the school.

The Upper Yarra Secondary College Council has made a considerable effort to ensure that this school policy is fair and provides a number of options to support parents to access the materials and services associated with their child's education.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss your circumstances and the options available to you, please contact the school to make an appointment.

Further information:

The Department's policy is available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/lifeatschool/parentpayments.htm>

The school-level parent payment policy will be available on the Upper Yarra Secondary College website. This policy is also available on request from the school.

Yours sincerely

Ms Patricia Broom  
**Acting Principal**