Mount Waverley Primary School

PARENT PAYMENTS & EMA POLICY

Rationale
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.

School Councils can request payments from parents for student materials and service charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:

- **Essential education items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. Stationery, art supplies, text books, and school uniforms where required).
- **Optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and carers may choose whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. Extra curricula programs / activities such as Chess, Instrumental Music, school-based performances, Excursions, Camps, swimming programs and sports events).
- **Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians are requested to donate to the school (e.g. Grounds beautification, additional computers, library books, Smartboards, school equipment)

Aims
Mt Waverley Primary School will ensure that:

- sufficient funds are raised through parent payments and voluntary contributions to enable the school to offer a high quality educational program.
- students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for educational items, services or voluntary financial contribution.
- parent/carer payments for essential education items and optional extras are kept to a minimum and do not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the students.

Guidelines
- It is important that this policy is communicated within the school and that all staff are familiar with and adhere to it. It will be on the website and available on request.
- A variety of extra curricular activities (e.g. excursions) will be offered to compliment the educational program and these will be provided on a user-pays basis.
- Where families have difficulty making payments, the principal will discuss the range of support options available and negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement.
- All communication with parents will be fair and reasonable and based on the spirit of the school's values.
- This policy complies with the requirements of the DEECD policy.

Policy reviewed May 2013
Implementation

- The school will provide parents and carers with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. A minimum of six weeks notice will be provided to allow sufficient planning time for amounts over $20.
- Written payment requests will outline the purchase of essential educational items from the school through a tendered supplier, payment options, details of spending intentions and how to access the school policy.
- Payment requests to parents/carers must clearly identify which category the items fall into. The three categories are outlined above.
- Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon payment.
- Payment may be requested, but not required, prior to the commencement of the year in which materials and services will be used.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments will remain confidential.
- The school will only issue one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.
- Invoices for unpaid essential educational items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month. Debt collectors of any type will not be used to obtain funds from parents/guardians.
- Optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis, and if parents/carers choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.
- The school may request voluntary financial contributions to improve or beautify buildings or grounds, to provide resources and equipment to maintain and extend the high quality school program provided, to support a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. ICT equipment) or to make a general financial contribution or donation to the school.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

- Parents/guardians will be informed of the availability of EMA.
- Parents/guardians have the option of receiving their portion of EMA by EFT directly into their bank account or by cheque.
- Parents/guardians in receipt of EMA will be made aware that they do not need to sign over their portion of the payment.
- Payment arrangements should coincide with the timing of the availability of EMA support for eligible parents/carers.
- Eligible parents/guardians may choose to sign over their portion of the EMA cheque as payment towards essential items.
- The school’s portion of the EMA cannot be used to offset voluntary financial contributions.
- Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year must be returned to the parent/guardian unless there is an agreement that this money be carried over to the following year.
- The EMA allowance may not cover the full cost of essential items. In this instance, the school can request payment of the balance to cover the full cost of essential items.

Evaluation

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

Related Policies

Refunds Policy