Eltham North Primary School School Parent Contributions Policy

Parent Payments 2022:

DET have released mandatory guidelines regarding how schools must implement the parent Payment Policy.

POLICY
This Parent Payments Policy outlines the ways in which the school council can request financial contributions from parents and ensures that parent payment practices in schools are consistent, transparent and that all children have access to the Curriculum.

SUMMARY
• Victorian government schools must provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the curriculum requirements in the 8 key learning areas as outlined in the Victorian Curriculum F–10.
• School councils may request parents make voluntary financial contributions towards the cost of schooling under categories: Curriculum Contributions and Other Contributions.
• School councils may invite parents to purchase Extra-Curricular Items and Activities – items, activities and services that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are additional to or outside of the school’s delivery of the Curriculum (including alternative forms of instruction). These are provided on a user-pays basis.
• School councils may invite parents to supply or purchase their own educational items to use and to own. If a student does not provide or purchase their own educational items, the school must ensure the student has free access to what is needed at school to access the school’s delivery of the Curriculum.
• Schools must follow the requirements on finance and communications set out in the guidance.

Implementing the policy in schools. The school must:
• follow the finance requirements set out in the guidance
• follow the communication requirements set out in the guidance
• use the templates provided by the Department to create and communicate their parent payment arrangements
• follow all monitoring and compliance requirements as directed by the Department.
Schools develop their parent payment arrangements to suit the contextual needs and aspirations of their school community while ensuring their arrangements remain in alignment with this policy.

The school must not:
• refuse instruction of the curriculum to a student if parents do not make a parent payment or purchase any Extra-Curricular Items and Activities or their own educational items
• discriminate, harass or coerce parents or students in relation to payments
• approach students regarding any payments
• undertake debt recovery activities for any payments
• ask parents to pay for reasonable adjustments for children with a disability
• publish parent payment arrangements and school policies that are inconsistent with these requirements.

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY
FREE INSTRUCTION
• Schools provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
• Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.

PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS
Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:
1. Curriculum Contributions
Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.

2. Other Contributions
Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school’s functions and objectives.

3. Extra-Curricular Items and Activities
Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

• School may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices ).

FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES
• Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn’t miss out.
• Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.

SCHOOL PROCESSES
• Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.

This policy was approved by School Council in September 2021