



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Rosebud Primary School office on 5986 8274.

## PURPOSE

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

## RATIONALE

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 requirements of the Curriculum. This includes the Victorian Curriculum F-10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) including the VCE Vocational Major and the Victorian Pathways Certificate.

## PARENT PAYMENT CATEGORIES

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 parents 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.

These items include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery;
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles
- Transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

**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.

These items include:

- student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use;
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, classes;
- school-based performances, productions and events; and
- Class photographs.

## 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.

## 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 Rosebud Primary School council 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 once per term 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. The Principal and Rosebud Primary School council 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 include State Schools Relief, CSEF, RPS Welfare Officer, Southern Peninsula Community Support and other Local Community Services.

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 parents experiencing financial difficulty should contact Shara Grahame on 5986 8274 to arrange a payment plan/paying via instalments.

### **Second-hand Uniform**

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education, we do have some second hand uniform available.

## PAYMENT METHODS

Rosebud Primary School Council offers the following payment methods: BPAY (preferred method) Cash, Eftpos, Visa/MasterCard, and payment plan.

## ENGAGING / COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

All communication with parents or guardians about education items, including requests for payment, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES 21 invoices for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following information:

- parent/guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and they have the option of purchasing these preferably through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate
- the availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the principal if the parent wishes to discuss these
- details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school
- a copy of the school-level policy is available upon request.

Payment requests or letters to parents or guardians will clearly identify which category the items fall into, i.e. essential education items, optional education items or voluntary financial contributions.

## REFUND

Refunds to parents for camps, excursions, incursions will only be made if the parent/child has a valid reason as to why the child cannot attend e.g. illness, family trauma etc.

It will be the decision of Shara Grahame and Stephen Fisher as to the refund being approved.

All refunds approved for process will need to be done via parent's/family bank accounts, they will be provided with a form to complete and payment will be processed on the next available creditor payment run.

All documentation will be attached to the parents statement and filed with the payment voucher and/or in the folder of credit note/reversals where the refund amount is being left on the school family account.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Rosebud Primary School will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at every year as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

## REFERENCES

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

- Rosebud Primary School Parent Payments Policy/Arrangements [www.rosebudps.vic.edu.au](http://www.rosebudps.vic.edu.au)
- Rosebud Primary School Parent Payments One Page Visual [www.rosebudps.vic.edu.au](http://www.rosebudps.vic.edu.au)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| Policy last reviewed       | 08/2023          |
| Consultation               | DET POLICY       |
| Approved by                | Business Manager |
| Next scheduled review date | 08/2024          |