

PARENT PAYMENT AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

PURPOSE

- To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.
- To enable Brandon Park Primary School to operate in a financially viable and planned way within the framework of the Student Resource Package.

Aim

To provide high quality learning opportunities that caters to the needs of all students.

Implementation

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.

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.

School Council and the Finance Committee will ensure that the school complies with DET policy.

Parents who have difficulty paying for optional items are to be directed to a range of support options, including:

- The [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#) provides payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply and a Special Consideration eligibility category also exists.
- [State Schools' Relief](#) may cover the cost of new school uniforms, shoes, books and more for disadvantaged students. State Schools' Relief only responds to requests from school principals, assistant principals or welfare coordinators. Parents or Carers who are struggling need to make an appointment with the school to discuss their situation.
- The Child Care Benefit helps eligible families with the cost of outside school hours care, vacation care and registered care. For more information about eligibility and making claims, see Centrelink: [Child Care Benefit](#)

Payment Arrangements and Non-Payment

- Students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions;
- All students will have access to the standard curriculum program;
- The school will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment;
- Parents and guardians will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp;
- Statements for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month;
- Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is to be sent to all parents and guardians;
- Under no circumstances will collectors of any type including debt collectors, be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents and guardians;
- The Principal will ensure any records of payment or contribution by parents and guardians is kept entirely confidential;
- The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is deemed unacceptable and will not occur in any circumstances.

Camps / Excursions – General Guidelines

- Costs for camps and excursions will be kept to a minimum and will be notified to parents as far in advance as is possible.
- Parents must pay in advance (by a given date on the permission note) for any excursion or camp, unless an explicit arrangement has been made with the Principal, Assistant Principal or Business Managers.
- Where cancellation or non-participation by the student incurs a charge by an operator, this charge will be borne by parents.
- Any costs associated with the student returning from an excursion early due to illness or serious misbehaviour are the responsibility of the parent.
- Refunds are given as credits on family accounts.

Excursions

Parents may cancel their child's participation in an excursion in advance. The charges for these excursions already paid will be credited to the child's account, less costs already paid by the school or expected to be invoiced by the excursion venue/bus operator etc., on provision of a doctor's medical certificate.

Camps

As camps are significantly more expensive and consequently there is more risk of financial cost to the school, the guidelines for refunds are as follows;

- deposits are non-refundable,
- other payments towards the cost of the camp are refundable if cancelled 90 days or more pre-camp,
- within 90 – 60 days pre-camp, payments are refunded less any costs already paid by the school or expected to be invoiced by the camp operator,
- any camp cancellations within 60 days will only be refunded on provision of a doctor's medical certificate or in the case of a bereavement.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in December 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2020.

