

## Kismet Park Primary School

### Parent Payments

#### 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.

School councils are responsible for developing a school-level policy which covers essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. This school-level policy must meet the community's expectations and be available to parents and guardians upon request. The school-level policy must keep parent payments to a minimum and must not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.

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

**1. Essential education items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child. 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. home economics, ceramics, photography, catering);
- school uniform (where applicable)
- essential services associated with, but not considered to be a part of, instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).

**2. Optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. school magazines, extra curricular programs or activities). 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, internet access for recreational or non-school use, and religious education materials)
- 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 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 SRP (e.g. student accident insurance, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).

**3. Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians are **invited** to donate to the school (e.g. grounds beautification, additional computers). Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:

- contributions to a building and grounds beautification trust fund or contributions to a library trust 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.

#### AIMS:

The Kismet Park Primary School Parent Payment Policy should assist School Council in the allocation of resources and to ensure a transparent and fair process is in place for all parent payments.

To ensure that from 2009 the school-level policy for parent payments and voluntary financial contributions is fully compliant with the DEECD policy.

## IMPLEMENTATION:

- The school will provide parents and guardians with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. Parents must be given at least 6 weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year. This should be given to allow parents sufficient planning time. Please note that payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- Parents will be made aware of payment requirements via the school newsletter and transition to the next grade packs. New families will receive the information as part of the 'Information Package' for parents.
- A letter to parents outlining the parent payment on Victorian Government Schools will accompany the request for payment notification at least six weeks prior to the end of the previous school year and be signed by the Principal and School Council President.
- Parents/guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and they have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate. Booklists and supplies necessary for the student will be supplied in Term 4 of the preceding year. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school. However, there are some items which, due to their nature, may only be provided by the school.
- The school will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions.
- The school will ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians are confidential.
- Parents will be encouraged to pay for essential items as early as practicable but encouraged to have payments finalised by the end of Term 1 each year.
- Parents and guardians who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential education items, should be encouraged to make an appointment with the principal or other nominated senior staff member to discuss alternative payment methods. Parents will be able to access a payment plan system if required and an invitation to contact the principal if the parent wishes to discuss this will be available.
- Where families have difficulty making payments, the principal will discuss the range of support options available; these include the School Start Bonus, State School Relief and a range of local welfare and support agencies and negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement, such as payment by instalments.
- Payment requests, letters or CASES 21 invoices for student materials and services charges must clearly identify which category the items fall into, i.e. essential education items, optional education items or voluntary financial contributions.
- The school may issue only one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.
- It is not acceptable to use coercion or to harass parents and guardians to obtain 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.
- Parents and guardians are to be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp.
- Invoices 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.
- Under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.
- Where principals or school councils are uncertain if voluntary financial contributions can reasonably be invited from parents and guardians, they should seek advice from their DEECD regional office.
- A copy of this Parent Payment policy is available upon request.

## EVALUATION

The school council finance sub committee will review the Parent Payments Policy on an annual basis when reviewing booklist charges for the forthcoming year.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **February 2015**