



# POOWONG CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

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## DET Parent Payment Policy

This policy outlines the ways in which school councils can request payments or voluntary contributions from parents and ensures that parent payment practices in schools are consistent, transparent and that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

### Summary

- All students in Victorian government schools must have free access to instruction that is offered by a school to fulfil the curriculum requirements in the eight key learning areas of the Victorian Curriculum F-10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).
- School councils can only request payments from parents under 3 categories: Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Contributions.
- Schools must consider the [Financial Help for Families Policy](#) and make arrangements for families who are experiencing financial hardship and unable to make payments.
- Schools must have their parent payment arrangements approved by their school council and uploaded onto their public websites.
- Schools cannot:
  - deny students access to the standard curriculum program, refuse instruction or disadvantage students on the basis of payments not being made for education items or activities
  - request payments from parents for school operating costs (for example, utility costs) or general and unspecified charges (for example, subject levies)

### Details

Schools and school councils must adhere to the Parent Payments Policy which is outlined as follows.

#### Free instruction

All students in Victorian government schools must have free access to instruction that is offered by a school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in the 8 key learning areas:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Sciences (including physics, chemistry and biology)
4. Humanities and social sciences (including history, geography, economics, business, civics and citizenship)
5. The arts
6. Languages
7. Health and physical education
8. Information and communication technology and design and technology.

Free instruction includes the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

Schools cannot deny students access to the standard curriculum program, refuse instruction or disadvantage students on the basis of payments not being made for education items or activities. Schools cannot withhold student access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payments being made.

#### Parent payment categories

School councils can only request payments from parents under 3 categories:

##### **1. Essential Student Learning Items**

Essential Student Learning Items are items and activities which the school deems as essential for student learning, without which, students would be unable to access the school's delivery of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase essential items through the school or provide their own. Where a child cannot provide an essential student learning item or participate in an essential activity, the school must make alternative arrangements e.g. make the item available through the school or provide alternative financial support options.

Essential Student Learning Items do not include:

- school operating costs (refer to School operating costs in the [Guidance](#) tab)
- generic subject levies or fees
- non-curriculum related costs
- unspecified charges

Schools must be able to justify why an item or activity has been categorised as an Essential Student Learning Item.

Refer to Essential Student Learning Items in the Guidance section for further information.

## **2. Optional Items**

Optional Items are items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum. Students access these on a user pays basis.

Optional Items include non-curriculum-based school events, optional excursions and camps, optional sporting or music programs and materials that don't relate to the standard curriculum such as school magazines.

## **3. Voluntary Contributions (PCS does not ask for Voluntary Contributions from families)**

School councils can invite parents to make a voluntary contribution to support the school. Voluntary Contributions can be for general or clearly explained specific purposes that relate to the school council's functions and objectives. Where a Voluntary Contribution is requested for a specific purpose, the funds may only be used for that purpose.

There are no obligations on parents to make any Voluntary Contributions and schools cannot refuse students instruction in the standard curriculum if their parents do not contribute.

## **School's parent payment arrangements**

Schools do not need to develop their own school-level parent payment policy. However, schools should develop their own parent payment arrangements that suit their local context. Parent payment arrangements include the school's:

- payment requests to parents for items and activities. Items and activities must be clearly specified, accurately costed and itemised using the 3 categories
- financial support options for parents experiencing financial hardship
- payment methods

Schools must:

- have their parent payment arrangements approved by their school council prior to communicating it to parents
- upload their parent payment arrangements onto their school website for transparency (refer to [Uploading parent payment arrangements onto the school website in the Guidance](#) tab)

Schools must use the [Parent Payment Arrangements Template](#) to develop arrangements and communicate these to parents.

## **Definitions**

### **Standard curriculum**

Standard curriculum is the Victorian Curriculum F-10, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

### **Related policies**

- [Finance Manual — Financial Management for Schools](#)
- [Financial Help for Families](#)
- [Personal Devices — Access](#)
- [School Council — Powers and Functions](#)
- [Student Dress Code](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)

### **Relevant legislation**

- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Education Training and Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)

## Financial help for families

Schools have a commitment and responsibility to be responsive to parents who may be experiencing either short-term or long-term financial hardship.

Schools must:

- ensure costs to parents are kept to a minimum and made affordable for families
- consider the Financial Help for Families Policy and make arrangements for families who are experiencing financial hardship and unable to make payments for their child
- nominate a parent payment contact person(s) to support families with parent payment arrangements

Refer to [Financial Help for Families](#) for further information.

## Second-hand Uniform

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the school advertises second-hand uniform on behalf of parents, via the school Poowong CS Uniform Buy Swap and Sell Facebook Page. Parents can list their second hand items for sale and conduct these transactions privately.

## Other support options

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. Payment plans can be arranged through the principal. Other options are outlined at [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/families.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/families.aspx)

## Payment arrangements

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (prior to the end of the previous school year).

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and statements sent home each term. To further assist parents with payments, payment options have been developed:

- Option A Full amount (\$200 per student) at the beginning of the school year
- Option B Other payment arrangements, as arranged with the Principal

**Please note:** Payments are to cover Essential Education Items only. Optional Educational Items (such as excursions and incursions) will be notified to parents 2 weeks prior to the event via notice. An outline of expected Optional Educational Items can be found within the 2019 Essential Student Requisites information, as supplied with this Parent Payment Policy).

Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss circumstances and available options. If payment plans are requested, it is expected that the terms of these payment plans be met, as arranged.

Payments may be requested, but not required prior to the commencement of the year, in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests or Statements to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Payments will be receipted when received. Receipts will be issued to parents as soon as possible once payments are made. Receipts are either handed to parents directly or sent home with students for parent records. EFT receipts are available at the time of payment. This can be done in person or via credit card over the phone.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items will be generated and distributed each term to parents.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** Payments for Essential Education Items (Book Packs **and** Student Requisites) are required to be paid in full **before** payments for Optional Education Items eg. Camps, Excursions etc.

Where amounts for Essential Items are outstanding, all amounts paid to the school will be taken off these amounts prior to paying for camps and excursions.

### **Distribution of Book Packs**

Once payment is made for Book Packs, arrangements can be made for these to be labelled with your child's name and sent directly to the classroom. Should you wish to take these home with you, you are more than welcome to do this, however we would request that **ALL** materials within the Book Pack and brought back to school on the first day, as the books are labelled with the children's names and different book labels according to what they will be used for. Extra items are put into a zip-lock bag with the child's name clearly written and stored for distribution when your child is in need of replacement supplies. Any items not used will be given to the children at the end of the school year to take home.

This policy will be reviewed each year by School Council prior to distribution of the Essential Student Requisites lists.

### **Contact**

Parent Payments Team Strategy and Integration Division

1800 955 913

parent.payments@education.vic.gov.au

### **Policy last reviewed: September 2020**

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



their first day of school. Teachers will ensure that all items are labelled with your child's name for use throughout the year.

*Please note- If you choose to pay by direct deposit, books will automatically be distributed to your child's grade upon the funds being cleared into the school account- please ring or send an email letting us know you have transferred the funds to the school account.*

**Support options available to families:**

- **CSEF**- The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund is available for families in receipt of a current Health Care Card, as at the start of 2021. Please see the office for the application forms. Alternatively you may wish to print these from the website described in the Parent Payment Policy attached. In 2021, families eligible for the CSEF received \$125 per child, which is held at the school on your behalf to allocate at your request. This cannot be used for book packs or requisites.
- **State Schools Relief**- The SSR is available for families experiencing hardship with uniforms and shoes for their children. This support is available at the discretion of the Principal and the guidelines for application include families who have: health issues resulting in serious financial difficulty, house fires where school clothing is lost, natural disasters, serious financial difficulty etc. Please make an appointment to discuss your circumstances with the Principal should you wish for the school to lodge an application on your behalf.

**2021 Optional Extras Draft Planner (Approximate Costs Included)**

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Grade 6 T-Shirts/ Jumpers- Screen printing estimated cost \$5-6 per item	Incursions and Excursions as notified- no more than \$30	Incursions and Excursions as notified- no more than \$30	Incursions and Excursions as notified- no more than \$30
School Photos \$20-40 depending on package chosen	Grade 3/4 Waratah Bay Camp- \$250- \$300	Grade 1 Dinner- \$5 / Grade2 Sleepover- \$10	Grade Prep Teddy Bears Picnic- \$5
Zone, Regional and District Swimming (Gr 3-6 only) \$5- \$10 if selected	Lightening Premiership (Gr 5/6 only) \$5-\$10 if selected	Grade 5/6 Camp Mill Valley Ranch- \$350	Grade 6 Graduation- \$15
JSC Fundraising- gold coin donation	JSC Fundraising- gold coin donation	JSC Fundraising- gold coin donation	JSC Fundraising- gold coin donation
Swimming/ Water Safety Program- TBC	Zone, Regional and District Athletics & Cross Country (Gr 3-6 only) \$5- \$10 if selected	Young Ambassadors Program (gr. 5/6 leaders)	Bush Dance- cost of drinks/snacks on the night if required
Swimming Carnival- spectator fee for families, entry for children (if no pool membership) Athletics Carnival- sausage sizzle and food van if chosen	Science Fair- Varies as is dependent on the chosen Science task/display	School Musical- tickets approximately \$2 per child/ \$5 per adult (audience only)	Regional Athletics (Gr 3-6 only) \$5-\$10 if selected
Pancake Day- gold coin donation	Maths Family Fun Night- \$5 per family	Book Week Book Fair- Varies as is dependent on family choice on purchasing books Costume required for Book Week Parade	Grade 6 Big Day Out- \$30
	Easter Raffle- donation of chocolate eggs and raffle tickets	Gr 3-6 student Bike Education Challenge \$5-\$10 if a bus is needed	

\*\*NB- There may be other Optional Extra Activities that are not yet listed in the calendar above. We will ensure to give families **two weeks** notice of any planned activity to assist with covering associated costs with participation.