

## MILAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL 2021

# PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

### PURPOSE

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

### RATIONALE

The Victorian community shares a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Schools are best placed to make local decisions which ensure that all students can access a broad range of learning opportunities that support their expectations and promote their aspirations as they move through the education system. Parent contribution, in all forms, assists schools to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by school communities.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources. This, in turn, informs the parent payment charges approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

### WHAT CAN SCHOOLS CHARGE FOR?

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

**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. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

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<sup>1</sup> Parent' in the policy has the same meaning as in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

The attached diagram "**Understanding Parent Payment Categories**" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

## **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 judgment 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 school councils 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 itemized 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 monthly 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. Principals and school councils 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 can be accessed through [“Cost support for families.”](#)

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 schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty.

All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.

### **ENGAGING WITH PARENTS**

In respect to each school’s development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

### **REVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

Schools will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

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

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see: [Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

# Understanding Parent Payment Categories

## Schools

### What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

### What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is 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.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

### What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability

Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

## Parents

### What may parents be asked to pay for?

#### Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

#### Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
- textbooks, activity books, exercise books
  - stationery, book bags
  - student ID cards, locks
  - cooking ingredients students will consume
  - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
  - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

#### Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
- excursions
  - incursions
  - school sports
  - work placements

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

#### Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are **optional** and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

#### Items the student purchases or hires

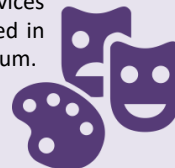
- e.g.
- school magazines, class photos
  - functions, formals, graduation dinners
  - materials for extra curricular programs
  - student accident insurance

#### Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
- fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
  - fees for guest speakers
  - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
  - entry fees for school run performances

#### Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
- use of silver in metal work instead of copper
  - supplementary exam revision guides



MILAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Parent Payment Policy

## PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

School councils are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in the three categories – essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

This policy ensures that:

- costs are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemized under the three parent payment categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution
- Access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.

Milawa Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students at the most effective cost.

Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

### Parent Payment Categories

**Essential education items** are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

These items include:

- Materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery (\$100). Explanation of items attached – Appendix A
- Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles e.g. Art (\$25), Science/Library (\$25), Cooking (\$10)
- Mathletics and Reading Eggs. These apps are used in the classroom and can be accessed at home to enrich twentieth century learning (\$25)
- Cluster Days - This includes our 4 x cluster days throughout the year. These include the performance and travel to locations (\$125). There may be others throughout the year that will occur.
- Grade Six School uniform - NB: this will be paid direct to the school upon orders
- Transport, entrance and accommodation for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend - NB: this will be paid direct to the school upon notification of costs. These are always kept to the lowest possible amount and the Parents and Friends Association always subsidizes these camps.

**Optional items** are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. These optional items 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:

- school-based performances, productions and events.
- student computer printing for personal use (20 cents per copy)
- Extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. music, dance classes, regional sports. These costs are charged direct by the supplier.
- School magazines, class photographs. These costs are charged direct by the supplier.

- Student dinners is supplied and paid for by the Parents and Friends Association.

**Voluntary Financial Contributions** are for those items and services that parents or guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, general voluntary contributions, library/building fund or for new equipment (\$120).

## **PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS**

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

Costs will be kept to a minimum with payment requests/letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

Option A	Full amount at the beginning of Term 1
Option B	Payment at the beginning of each Term
Option C	Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3)
Option D	Other payment arrangements

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

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

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately or as soon as practical upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional extras will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

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

## **FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS**

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist eligible parents, including the Schoolkids Bonus, State Schools Relief Fund and the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.

## **CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP**

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions and often do not qualify (i.e. have a health care card) for available fund support. If this is the case parents/guardians are encouraged to approach the principal and/or business manager and discuss options. This can be done in person, over the phone or writing. The school will keep this information confidential and support families to find a solution.

When reflecting on the school's hardship arrangements, we will consider proactive strategies to engage with parents disconnected from the school who may be experiencing hardship, such as discretely approaching families who may need support and special payment arrangements.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

Communication with families may occur in many different ways. This parent payment policy will be included with enrolment packs so that each and every parent has a hardcopy.

The weekly newsletter will act as a reminder when there are upcoming events that require payment.

This policy will also be available on our school website.

If parents/guardians have any concerns with this policy they are encouraged to speak directly with the school principal.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

The Milawa Primary School council takes full responsibility in monitoring and implementing this policy. The business manager will advise the council as to costing, materials required, extra-curricular activities, etc. and guide the council as to identifying factors/measures that need to be considered before passing this policy. Engagement with parents/guardians will take place with the principal/business manager and be reported back to school council where necessary.

This policy will be reviewed annually in November with updates made as per DET guidelines.

Prepared by: Ash Campbell

**Date of approval by School Council**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

## APPENDIX A – PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

### MILAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL Foundation / One SCHOOL MATERIALS AND CHARGES FOR 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is a breakdown of our school financial contributions for 2021. In line with our recently updated Parent Payment Policy, these items are identified under three categories, Essential Educational Items, Optional Items or Voluntary Financial Contributions. It is important that all parents are aware of our policy and the contents contained within it. The school’s income is a combination of funds from the government, fundraising and charges. We have established an outstanding culture at Milawa Primary School and much of our combined funding via the government as well as the outstanding efforts of our fundraising contributes to your child to obtaining a low cost yet highly valued education.

The contributions on your invoice will include amounts for Essential Learning, Optional and Voluntary Items.

The contributions on your invoice may include amounts for grounds maintenance. Due to OHS policy parents are not permitted to use mowing equipment, thus we have to employ someone to do it which is an additional cost to the school. If you have not elected to go on the grounds roster, then your invoice will include a charge for grounds maintenance. The grounds roster provides for each family to be allocated one weekend of grounds maintenance and one pre-term working bee.

You will need to pay for extra-curricular excursions, such as swimming and major excursions, separately during the year because the costs of those excursions are not covered by the charge on your invoice. Where practical we will provide parents with as much time as possible to budget for all expenses.

<p><b>A. Essential Educational Items</b></p> <p><b>Provision of all resources associated with student requisites.</b></p> <p><b>Cluster and General Excursions</b></p>	<p>\$260</p> <p>\$125</p>
<p><b>B. Voluntary and Optional Financial Contributions</b></p> <p><b>Grounds Maintenance</b></p> <p><b>Extra Curricula Activities</b></p> <p>All of the events listed below are extra curricula and as such are voluntary. Payment is required if a child is attending.</p> <p>Parents will be advised when payments are required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade F/1 Excursion approx. \$20 – (\$30 subsidy as a result of fundraising efforts)</li> <li>- Swimming 5 sessions - approx. \$70</li> </ul>	<p>\$120</p> <p>\$20</p> <p>\$70</p>
<p><b>Total</b></p>	<p>\$595</p>



## **ADDITIONAL EXPLANATORY NOTES**

**In the past parents/carers who hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card have been able to offset some costs with Educational Maintenance Allowance . This payment is no longer available. Milawa Primary has a long history of supporting all families experiencing financial difficulty. If this is the case then please contact the school and arrange a meeting with Ash Campbell and Di Robinson to formulate a payment plan. Some parents are however able to obtain the governments assistance package for camps and excursions. The CESF program is strongly encouraged to be taken up by all eligible families.**

### **A Student Requisites**

School requisites and materials which students take possession of provided by the school to produce work are items like pencils, pens, paper, writing books, crayons, textas as well as our school subsidised provision of ICT equipment for all year levels. An itemised list of items can be obtained from the office. The portion of this charge is \$260 (\$130 per semester) which is a combination of essential student learning items that do require payment. It also includes our affiliation costs with the MACC and MARC programs which provide Art, Science and Library services to our school.

### **A Excursions**

The excursion component contributes to transport to and attendance at Ovens Learning Community cluster days and other excursions as they arise during a school year. The portion of this charge is \$125. This is an essential educational item and payment is required for students to attend.

### **B Grounds Maintenance**

Money received in grounds maintenance is used to develop and maintain the gardens and grounds. This voluntary contribution is levied on each family. Alternatively, parents may opt to be on the grounds roster throughout the year to tidy the grounds.

### **Extra Curricula Activities**

Swimming, camps and excursions are all extra curricula activities. This payment will be Collected before each event for all students participating.

**MILAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Grs 2/3/4 SCHOOL MATERIALS AND CHARGES FOR 2021**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is a breakdown of our school financial contributions for 2021. In line with our recently updated Parent Payment Policy, these items are identified under three categories, Essential Educational Items, Optional Items or Voluntary Financial Contributions. It is important that all parents are aware of our policy and the contents contained within it. The school’s income is a combination of funds from the government, fundraising and charges. We have established an outstanding culture at Milawa Primary School and much of our combined funding via the government as well as the outstanding efforts of our fundraising contributes to your child to obtaining a low cost yet highly valued education.

The contributions on your invoice will include amounts for Essential Learning, Optional and Voluntary Items.

The contributions on your invoice may include amounts for grounds maintenance. Due to OHS policy parents are not permitted to use mowing equipment, thus we have to employ someone to do it which is an additional cost to the school. If you have not elected to go on the grounds roster, then your invoice will include a charge for grounds maintenance. The grounds roster provides for each family to be allocated one weekend of grounds maintenance and one pre-term working bee.

You will need to pay for extra-curricular excursions, such as swimming and major excursions, separately during the year because the costs of those excursions are not covered by the charge on your invoice. Where practical we will provide parents with as much time as possible to budget for all expenses.

<b>A. Essential Educational Items</b>	
<b>Provision of all resources associated with student requisites.</b>	\$260
<b>Cluster and General Excursions</b>	\$125
<b>B. Voluntary and Optional Financial Contributions</b>	
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	\$120
<b>Extra Curricula Activities</b>	
All of the events listed below are extra curricula and as such are voluntary. Payment is required if a child is attending.	
Parents will be advised when payments are required.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade Three/Four Camp 15 Mile Creek \$260 approximately(subsidy provided as a result of fundraising contributions)</li> <li>- Grade Two Excursion approx. \$20 – (\$30 subsidy as a result of fundraising efforts)</li> <li>- Swimming 5 sessions - approx. \$70</li> </ul>	<p>\$160</p> <p>\$20</p> <p>\$70</p>
<b>Total</b>	Grade Two: \$595      Grade Three/Four: \$735

## **ADDITIONAL EXPLANATORY NOTES**

**In the past parents/carers who hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card have been able to offset some costs with Educational Maintenance Allowance . This payment is no longer available. Milawa Primary has a long history of supporting all families experiencing financial difficulty. If this is the case then please contact the school and arrange a meeting with Ash Campbell and Di Robinson to formulate a payment plan. Some parents are however able to obtain the governments assistance package for camps and excursions. The CESF program is strongly encouraged to be taken up by all eligible families.**

### **A. Student Requisites**

School requisites and materials which students take possession of provided by the school to produce work are items like pencils, pens, paper, writing books, crayons, textas as well as our school subsidised provision of ICT equipment for all year levels. An itemised list of items can be obtained from the office. The portion of this charge is \$260 (\$130 per semester) which is a combination of essential student learning items that do require payment. It also includes our affiliation costs with the MACC and MARC programs which provide Art, Science and Library services to our school.

### **Excursions**

The excursion component contributes to transport to and attendance at Ovens Learning Community cluster days and other excursions as they arise during a school year. The portion of this charge is \$125. This is an essential educational item and payment is required for students to attend.

### **B. Grounds Maintenance**

Money received in grounds maintenance is used to develop and maintain the gardens and grounds. This voluntary contribution is levied on each family. Alternatively, parents may opt to be on the grounds roster throughout the year to mow and tidy the grounds.

### **Extra Curricula Activities**

Swimming, camps and excursions are all extra curricula activities. This payment will be collected before each event for all students participating.

**MILAWA PRIMARY SCHOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Grades 5/6 SCHOOL MATERIALS AND CHARGES FOR 2021**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is a breakdown of our school financial contributions for 2021. In line with our recently updated Parent Payment Policy, these items are identified under three categories, Essential Educational Items, Optional Items or Voluntary Financial Contributions. It is important that all parents are aware of our policy and the contents contained within it. The school's income is a combination of funds from the government, fundraising and charges. We have established an outstanding culture at Milawa Primary School and much of our combined funding via the government as well as the outstanding efforts of our fundraising contributes to your child to obtaining a low cost yet highly valued education.

The contributions on your invoice will include amounts for Essential Learning, Optional and Voluntary Items.

The contributions on your invoice may include amounts for grounds maintenance. Due to OHS policy parents are not permitted to use mowing equipment, thus we have to employ someone to do it which is an additional cost to the school. If you have not elected to go on the grounds roster, then your invoice will include a charge for grounds maintenance. The grounds roster provides for each family to be allocated one weekend of grounds maintenance and one pre-term working bee.

You will need to pay for extra-curricular excursions, such as swimming and major excursions, separately during the year because the costs of those excursions are not covered by the charge on your invoice. Where practical we will provide parents with as much time as possible to budget for all expenses.

<b>A. Essential Educational Items</b>	
<b>Provision of all resources associated with student requisites.</b>	\$285
<b>Cluster and General Excursions</b>	\$125
<b>B. Voluntary and Optional Financial Contributions</b>	
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	\$120
<b>Extra Curricula Activities</b>	
All of the events listed below are extra curricula and as such are voluntary. Payment is required if a child is attending.	
Parents will be advised when payments are required.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade Five/Six Canberra Camp \$350 (subsidy provided as a result of fundraising contributions)</li> </ul>	\$350
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Swimming 5 sessions - approx. \$70</li> </ul>	\$70
<b>Total</b>	Grades Five/Six: \$950

## **ADDITIONAL EXPLANATORY NOTES**

**In the past parents/carers who hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card have been able to offset some costs with Educational Maintenance Allowance . This payment is no longer available. Milawa Primary has a long history of supporting all families experiencing financial difficulty. If this is the case then please contact the school and arrange a meeting with Ash Campbell and Di Robinson to formulate a payment plan. Some parents are however able to obtain the governments assistance package for camps and excursions. The CESF program is strongly encouraged to be taken up by all eligible families.**

### **A Student Requisites**

School requisites and materials which students take possession of provided by the school to produce work are items like pencils, pens, paper, writing books, crayons, textas as well as our school subsidised provision of ICT equipment for all year levels. An itemised list of items can be obtained from the office. The portion of this charge is \$285 (\$142.50 per semester) which is a combination of essential student learning items that do require payment. It also includes our affiliation costs with the MACC and MARC programs which provide Art, Science and Library services to our school.

### **Excursions**

The excursion component contributes to transport to and attendance at Ovens Learning Community cluster days and other excursions as they arise during a school year. The portion of this charge is \$125. This is an essential educational item and payment is required for students to attend.

### **B Grounds Maintenance**

Money received in grounds maintenance is used to develop and maintain the gardens and grounds. This voluntary contribution is levied on each family. Alternatively, parents may opt to be on the grounds roster throughout the year to tidy the grounds.

### **Extra Curricula Activities**

Swimming, camps and excursions are all extra curricula activities. This payment will be collected before each event for all students participating.