

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Tecoma Primary School

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 ASK CONTRIBUTIONS FOR:

As set out by the Department Parent Payment Policy August 2021

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 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 itemised within the appropriate category
- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent Curriculum Supplies 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 <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/parent-payment/policy>

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

PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW



FREE INSTRUCTION

- 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 standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
- Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.



PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Schools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

Curriculum Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum.

Other Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities

Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

- Schools may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices).



FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES

- Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn't miss out.
- Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.



SCHOOL PROCESSES

- Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.



Tecoma Primary School Parent Payment Policy

PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

Curriculum Contributions

These items will be broadly listed by each year level. The items have been selected by the teaching staff of each level to assist each student with their learning & development of the Standard Curriculum.

Extra-Curricular Item and Activities

These items are based on a 'user pays' basis. They will be listed at the start of each Term for each year level giving description and costs. In some cases, individual Programs i.e.: Swimming Program, will be sent out on an individual basis.

Other Contributions

School Council will meet each year and decide on the focus area where financial assistance will be required.

Once School Council has approved the Parent Payment Request, a detailed "Parent Payment Request" and accompanying documentation will be issued to families within the first 2 weeks of Term 4 to allow Parents/Guardians ample time to arrange their payment options.

Once all parents have fulfilled their options, students will be given their Essential Items on the first day of school at the start of the year.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

The school council acknowledges that the Parent Payment Requests contacts will be the Business Manager and the Office Manager.

Parents are given the following options for payments:

1. Cash or cheque
2. EFT/Credit Card at office
3. QKR Payment App/Compass App
4. Internet Banking
5. Payment Plans to suit each individual accordingly.

Payment arrangements will be made on an individual basis that will suit their financial situation.

If a parent payment plan is required, it will be done in writing and signed by the parent/guardian, Business Manager and Principal.

A copy of the payment plan will be given to the parent/guardian and a copy kept on file at the school.

Parents who take up a Payment plan with Tecoma Primary School, will ensure that they will be able to fulfill the requirements of the plan.

If at any stage the Parent/guardian cannot fulfill their payment plan, they must contact the Business Manager and/or the Principal to make other arrangements.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

Tecoma Primary School can offer support with the following items:

- Second hand uniforms will be available for families.
- CSEF (Camps, Sport, Excursions Fund) (Eligibility Required)
- State Schools Relief
- School Council Family assistance fund.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

- The school can provide support to parents experiencing hardship.
- School Council recognises that some families may experience financial hardship (want to pay but cannot) from time to time and in a quest to ensure the best possible education for each child, the 'Family Support' options, as listed above, are available for all families at our school.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

- The Parent Payment Policy will be posted on the Tecoma Primary School Website, published in the Newsletter and copies will be available from the school office.
- Parents will be able to contact the school office in relation to any queries they have regarding the Parent Payment Policy.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

- School Council together with the Finance Committee will review the Payment Policy each year.
- The monitoring of student stationary supplies will be reviewed by the Business Manager and Teaching staff each year and presented to the Finance Committee.
- School Council will ensure all efforts are made to keep stationary items at reasonable costs and of a good quality.
- Items included in each stationary pack will have the items listed by the supplier and made available to parents if so requested.
- Parents/Guardians will be allowed to supply their own student material if they wish, but will have to liaise with the school to ensure that the items will be of the same quality as provided by the school.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| <i>This policy is to be reviewed annually or when updates are required.</i> | <i>This policy was approved by School Council on 27th February, 2024 and is scheduled for review in February 2025.</i> |
| <i>Reviewed by</i> | <i>Di Double, Karin Hartnell</i> |
| <i>Approved by</i> | <i>Acting Principal – Diane Double School Council President – Lisa Dell</i> |