

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Rationale

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 education items and voluntary financial contributions.

The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate books and requisites to meet the needs of our children. These are listed on the booklist provided to parents in October each year and must be purchased for the students. No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

As a Select Entry Specialist School for Dance and Music a Specialist Music and Dance Program Fee is required.

Guidelines

1. The following **Parent Payment Categories** are defined:
 - 1.1. **Essential education items** are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide. These items include:
 - 1.1.1. Work Planners, classroom resources, reports, access and ID cards, locker and lock rental
 - 1.1.2. Information Technology resources
 - 1.1.3. Materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery
 - 1.1.4. Materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles such as Healthy Cooking, Studio Arts and Media
 - 1.1.5. Specialist Music and Dance Program Fee
 - 1.1.6. Dance Wardrobe (Dancers)
 - 1.1.7. School dance and music performance and training uniforms
 - 1.1.8. Transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend
 - 1.2. **Optional education items** (or non-essential materials and services) are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. 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:
 - 1.2.1. Student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use
 - 1.2.2. Extra-curricular programs or activities
 - 1.2.3. School-based performances, productions and events
 - 1.2.4. School magazines, newsletters, class photographs
 - 1.3. **Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school such as the library and building funds
2. **Other support options**
 - 2.1. 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 parents, the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and State Schools Relief Committee support.
 - 2.2. Education Maintenance Allowance - A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who holds an eligible Centrelink concession card, may be entitled to the Education Maintenance Allowance.

Payment arrangements

- 2.3. Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year).
- 2.4. Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:
 - 2.4.1. Option A Full amount
 - 2.4.2. Option B Payment at the beginning of each Term
 - 2.4.3. Option C Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3)
 - 2.4.4. Option D Other, payment arrangements
- 2.5. Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to speak to the Principal or Business Manager to discuss circumstances and available options.
- 2.6. Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- 2.7. Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemized and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.
- 2.8. Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.
- 2.9. Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.
- 2.10. Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians.
- 2.11. All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

Status: Ratified by Council

Date: 23 August, 2011, revised: 1 December, 2012 (changes to DEECD EMA policy)

Review date:

Responsibility: Principal