

Croydon Community School

Parent Payment Policy



PURPOSE

This Parent Payments Policy outlines the ways in which school councils can request financial contributions from parent/carers and ensures that parent payment practices in schools are consistent, transparent and that all children have access to the Curriculum.

SUMMARY

- Victorian government schools must 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 curriculum requirements in the 8 key learning areas as outlined in the Victorian Curriculum F–10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) (the Curriculum).
- School councils may request parents make voluntary financial contributions towards the cost of schooling under 2 categories: Curriculum Contributions and Other Contributions.
- School councils may invite parents to purchase Extra-Curricular Items and Activities – items, activities and services that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are additional to or outside of the school’s delivery of the Curriculum (including alternative forms of instruction). These are provided on a user-pays basis.
- School councils may invite parents to supply or purchase their own educational items to use and to own. If a student does not provide or purchase their own educational items, the school must ensure the student has free access to what is needed at school to access the school’s delivery of the Curriculum.
- Schools must follow the requirements on finance and communications set out in the [guidance](#).

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:
 - English
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences (including physics, chemistry and biology)
 - Humanities and social sciences (including history, geography, economics, business, civics and citizenship)
 - The arts
 - Languages
 - Health and physical education
 - 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 Curriculum, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.
- Schools cannot deny students access to the Curriculum, refuse instruction or disadvantage students on the basis of payments and financial contributions not being made. Schools cannot withhold student access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payments being made.
- Schools are not required to ensure students have free access to items on a one-to-one basis, however, schools must determine a reasonable level of resourcing to ensure students have access to the relevant items for the duration they are required. Schools also need to consider the most appropriate arrangements to facilitate student access to required items.

PARENT PAYMENT CATEGORIES

School councils may request parents make voluntary financial contributions and payments to the school under the following categories. There are no obligations on parents to make any voluntary financial contributions and schools cannot refuse students instruction in the Curriculum if their parents do not contribute.

Refer to the [Guidance tab](#) for further information regarding these categories.

Curriculum Contributions

Curriculum Contributions are voluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum. Schools must be able to justify why an item or activity has been categorised as necessary to the school's delivery of the Curriculum.

Other Contributions

Other Contributions are voluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school's functions and objectives. They can be requested for a broad area of school need or itemised for a clearly explained specific purpose.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities are items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free in order to deliver the Curriculum. Extra-Curricular Items and Activities are provided on a user-pays basis. They include optional excursions and camps, optional sporting or music programs, and materials that don't relate to the Curriculum such as school magazines.

Purchase of educational items for students to own

School councils may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and to own. If a parent does not provide or purchase their own educational items, the school must ensure the student has free access to what is needed at school to access the school's delivery of the Curriculum.

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.

Implementing the policy in schools

Schools must:

- follow the finance requirements set out in the guidance
- follow the communication requirements set out in the guidance
- use the templates provided by the Department to create and communicate their parent payment arrangements
- follow all monitoring and compliance requirements as directed by the Department.
- Schools develop their parent payment arrangements to suit the contextual needs and aspirations of their school community while ensuring their arrangements remain in alignment with this policy.

Schools must not:

- refuse instruction of the Curriculum to a student if parents do not make a parent payment or purchase any Extra-Curricular Items and Activities or their own educational items
- discriminate, harass or coerce parents or students in relation to payments
- approach students regarding any payments
- undertake debt recovery activities for any payments
- ask parents to pay for reasonable adjustments for children with a disability
- publish parent payment arrangements and school policies that are inconsistent with these requirements.

FAMILY SUPPORT

There are a number of support options available for parents including the:

- Camps, Sports & Excursion Funding (CSEF) available to eligible parents
- Instalment payment options
- State School Relief
- Local Community Supports

Information regarding support options is available from the General Office and will be advertised periodically in the School Newsletter, Compass newsfeed and on the website.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Parent/carers are invited to make payment by either cash, cheque, card facility or BPAY. Parents are able to enter into confidential payment arrangements by contact the school.

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.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy, was endorsed/approved by School Council on 12th October , and will be reviewed annually.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department's:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/parent-payment/policy>

Please refer to the Schools:

- Camps and Excursions Policy
- Refund Policy
- Support for Families Experiencing Hardship Policy

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.

