

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 under three categories only- Curriculum Contributions, Other Contributions and Extra-Curricular Items and Activities.

Curriculum Contributions 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.

Other Contributions 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 have the option to pay for them.

Extra-Curricular Items and Activities

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 Other Contributions are tax-deductible.

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 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 Contribution 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 [Policy and Advisory Library](#).

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.

Brookside College

Parent Payment Policy

PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

Brookside P-9 College spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students. A list of all items from 2022 along with a description and cost within the three payment categories is attached to this policy (Appendix A). However all items will be reviewed in term 3, 2022 and submitted to School Council for approval for 2023 charges.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Parents and Guardians will be provided with timely written notice (a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the end of the previous school year) for all payment requests (including payment options), with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year.

The written communication will clearly identify which of the requested payments are Curriculum Contributions, Other Contributions, and Extra-Curricular Items and Activities.

All payments received will be receipted promptly through CASES21.

The status and details of any payments/financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel.

When making payment to the College for any transaction, the following payment options will be made available.

- Compass Parent Portal.
- Cash, cheque or EFTPOS in person or via a student at the General Office.
- Credit card in person, over the phone or by other arrangement (credit card details will not be retained).
- BPAY.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

The College appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. If required, a range of options are available to assist parents such as:

- State Schools Relief
- Brookside P-9 College hardship fund
- Camps/Sports/Excursions Funding (CSEF)

The College will actively encourage families who are eligible for CSEF to apply each year and will assist with the allocation of the funding towards eligible activities.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

Parents experiencing hardship are referred to the Student Welfare Team who then liaise with the families to provide financial support. The school has a hardship fund to also assist families who require assistance.

Classroom teachers/welfare officers are encouraged to report any concerns to the relevant Assistant Principal who will then offer discrete support to the family. Alternatively, families may request to meet with the relevant Assistant Principal at a mutually agreeable time.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

All communication with parents or guardians concerning Curriculum Contributions, Other Contributions, and Extra-Curricular Items and Activities (including requests for payment) will be fair and reasonable. The College will accurately cost and develop a list of payments requested from parents for students at each year level ensuring that payment options are available, easily accessible and easily understood to all parents. All request for payments, whether it be via letter, Cases21 or Compass will be accompanied by the following information:

- A breakdown of what Curriculum Contributions parents/guardians are required to provide for their students along with advice that they have the option of purchasing these through the College or through another supplier (where appropriate);
- The availability of alternative payment options (including instalments) and an invitation to contact the Business Manager if the parent wishes to discuss these;
- Details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the College.

Family reminder statements will be emailed or mailed to parents direct from CASES21 for Curriculum Contributions, Other Contributions, and Extra-Curricular Items and Activities once per school term.

The College will issue only one request for **Other Contributions** and one reminder notice and will not harass parents to obtain payment. The voluntary nature of this donation will be clearly indicated on the reminder.

A copy of this policy will be available via Compass and the School Website for Parents/Guardians to access at any time.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed in September of each year as part of the College's review cycle. Feedback will be sought from School Council members in regards to the transparency of processes and engagement with Parents.

Date of approval by School Council

23 June 2021

2022 Curriculum Contribution Items & Book Packs

Year 7 Year 8 Year 9

Book Packs 2022	\$281.82	\$187.29	\$228.13	Items will vary for each year level, a full list of items for each year level is provided to the parents in November. Included are maths text books, novels, pencils, markers, exercise books, display folders, glue, paper and all other items of stationery required for students throughout the year
Book Packs 2021	\$212.49	\$202.30	\$226.38	Items will vary for each year level, a full list of items for each year level is provided to the parents in November. Included are maths text books, novels, pencils, markers, exercise books, display folders, glue, paper and all other items of stationery required for students throughout the year

Diary	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	
Padlock				Students will have the option to purchase from the school or bring their own.
ID card	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	
Photocopies	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	The photocopying of supplementary notes helps support the delivery of those subjects that do not require parents to purchase text books.
Digital and assessment subscriptions	\$25.15	\$25.15	\$25.15	Online learning access to Compass and online assessment (PAT) -Compass-\$22, PAT-\$3.15
Provision and upkeep of school devices, peripherals and ICT	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	Provision and upkeep of school devices, peripherals and ICT (e.g. device configuration, maintenance, server/system costs)
Year 9 Futures			\$184.00	Martial Arts Therapy Program
Careers Year 7-9	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	
Year 9 Electives			\$50.00	Year 9 students will participate in an elective program in their final year at Brookside. Please note that some electives may charge additional fees to cover further costs.
Art	\$20.00	\$20.00		Students will print or produce projects and experiment with a range of materials while exploring the various dimensions of art.
Food Technology	\$30.00	\$30.00		All Year 7 & 8 students participate in food technology for 1 semester
Total Cost	\$132.15	\$132.15	\$316.15	
Subsidised by the School	\$32.15	\$32.15	\$216.15	
Curriculum contribution item charge	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	