



# PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

## CHILD SAFE STATEMENT

At Mornington Secondary College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental expectation of our college. Mornington Secondary College is committed to protecting students from abuse or harm while at school and in our care. Mornington Secondary College's Child Safety Code of Conduct is consistent with the Education Department's recommendation.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

## PURPOSE

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

## SCOPE

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.

## POLICY

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

This policy outlines the position of Mornington Secondary College in respect to the payment of essential, optional and voluntary parent contributions. This policy ensures that: costs are kept to a minimum, payment requests are clearly itemised 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 and 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.



## PARENT PAYMENT CATEGORIES

### Essential Educational Items (School Supplied Materials)

These are items which parents/guardians/guardians pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate. These items are essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program and include:

- materials that the individual student takes possession of, such as text books and student stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. home economics, photography, catering)
- school uniform
- activities associated with, but not part of instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).

Note: If parents/guardians/guardians choose to provide equivalent materials themselves, this should be done in consultation with the school, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school. However, there are some items (e.g. food provisions for home economics) which, due to their nature, can only be provided by the school.

### Optional Extras

These are items provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents/guardians/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them. These items include:

- instructional support material, resources and administration in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. student planner, student computer printing for personal use)
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music)
- school-based performances, productions and events
- materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives
- materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. school magazines)
- School facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program (e.g. student lockers, locks, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).

### Voluntary financial contributions

School councils are able to invite voluntary contributions from parents/guardians. At Mornington Secondary College these voluntary contributions are:

- Chaplaincy Contribution
- College Council Welfare
- College Council Building Fund
- First Aid Equipment
- State Schools Relief Contribution



The above contributions are not charged as a condition of student access to the standard educational programs and no student will be disadvantaged at any time.

#### Family support options

Second-hand book and uniform shop: In order to support parents/guardians in meeting the costs of their children's education parents/guardians can visit <https://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au/>.

State Schools Relief: This is an organisation whose purpose is to support families suffering financial hardship with school requisites such as uniforms, books etc. Students can be referred to the wellbeing team to seek assistance.

CSEF: The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (**CSEF**) provides payments for eligible students to attend activities like: school camps or trips; swimming and school-organised sport programs; outdoor education programs; excursions and incursions.. To be eligible to receive the package the student must be a Camps, Sports and Excursion. Fund (**CSEF**) recipient, generally families who hold a concession card .

#### Vocational Education Training in schools (VETIS) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

Vocational Education Training in schools (VETIS) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) delivery is covered by the core Student Resource Package (SRP) funding allocation. However parents/guardians are expected to pay for essential educational items and optional extras (as listed previously) related to their child's VET/VCAL course. Please note that the VETIS courses on offer at a school-level will be determined by the college on a yearly basis determined by the College SRP funding allocation.

Electives: Elective/subject charges are expected to be paid prior to the commencement of each year where the elective runs for the full year, and within two (2) weeks of the commencement of the semester in which the elective subject is taken where the elective runs for part of that school year. A deposit may be required upon enrolment in an individual elective to confirm the enrolment.

There may be instances where demand for a particular elective subject is high and students may be put on a waiting list. Even though every effort is made to accommodate the individual student's needs within the constraints of the college timetable and class numbers, preference may be given to those students who have paid the elective deposit.

Where a parent or student fails to pay the expected elective charge and only after reasonable time has been allowed for payment to occur, the student may, at the Principal's discretion, be offered an alternative lower or no cost elective in replacement of the higher cost elective. It is an expectation that the alternative elective will be paid in full within two (2) weeks of commencement.



## PAYMENT OPTIONS

Parents/guardians and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six-week's notice prior to the end of the previous school year). Costs will be kept to a minimum with payment requests/letters fair and reasonable.

To further assist parents/guardians with payments, five payment options have been developed, enabling parents/guardians to make payment by Cash, Cheque, BPAY, Credit Card or Direct Debit:

- Option A      Payment in full by the date provided (receives a 5% discount)
- Option B      Payment in 3 instalments – dates advised by College
- Option C      Payment by monthly instalments
- Option D      Payment by fortnightly instalments
- Option E      Payment by weekly instalments
- Option F      Payment by setting up a Centrelink payment plan

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents/guardians are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options. In certain circumstances of demonstrated financial hardship approval may be given for payment plans to be negotiated. Consideration will be made of all circumstances, only by the Principal or her delegate, Business Manager and where appropriate the Welfare Coordinator, before a decision is made and notified to those concerned. Receipts will be issued to parents/guardians immediately upon making payment.

## Statements

The college may elect to notify parents/guardians of outstanding charges by posting/emailing a Statement of Accounts to the person nominated to receive correspondence for a particular student. The accounts are normally processed twice a year, but in some instances may be processed more often where directed by College Council and/or the Principal.

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

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

## Non-Payment

Participation in non-curriculum specific activities not limited to but including activities such as Formals, Presentation Balls and various extra-curricular camps and excursions may be restricted if a participating student's College non-voluntary charges have not been paid.



Further details are contained in Department of Education and Training website.

## REVIEW CYCLE

Mornington Secondary College Council has approved this policy and reserves the right to review the policy in line with any future changes to Government policy and Mornington Secondary College objectives.

This policy was last ratified by school council on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018 and is scheduled for review in March 2019.