

November 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

**Re: Parent Contributions 2020**

The Malvern Primary School Council has approved the school's Parent Payment policy. This policy is attached below, along with the 2020 list of payments for your child's educational program.

**Purpose of Parent Contributions**

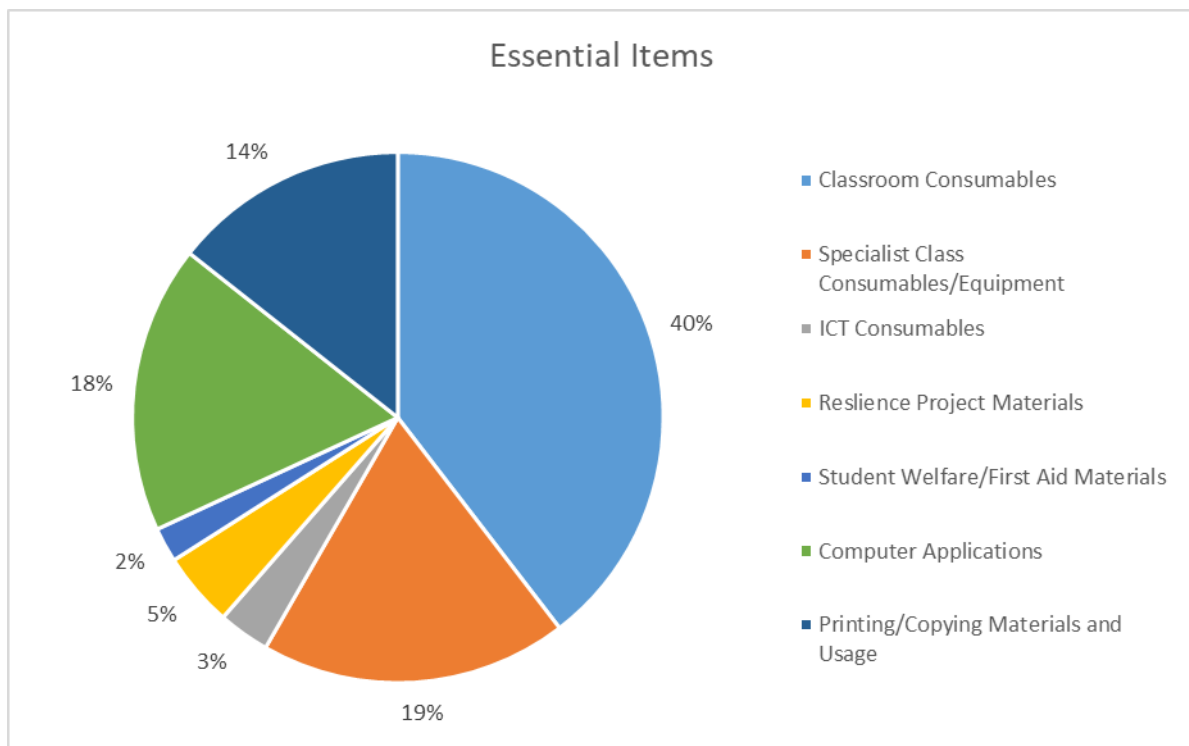
Malvern Primary School receives valuable support from our parent community. These contributions ensure we continue to offer a wide range of curriculum activities to our students, using the best possible equipment and facilities. The school makes every effort to keep costs to a minimum, to ensure affordability for all parents. We really appreciate this support from our families and look forward to maintaining and improving the quality of your children's educational programs and facilities in 2020.

School councils are responsible for developing and approving school-level parent payment charges and can request payments from parents under three categories:

1. Essential Student Learning Items;
2. Optional Items; and
3. Voluntary Financial Contributions

**Essential Student Learning and Optional items**

Malvern Primary School is pleased to convey that the proposed contributions for Essential Student Learning items is unchanged from prior years. Following feedback from the school community, the chart below shows how student Essential Learning items are allocated.



## Voluntary Contributions

In addition to Essential Learning and Optional items, we kindly ask parents to make a Voluntary Contribution toward four areas of the school's operation, to improve learning outcomes.

1. First Aid (\$70 per child)
2. Maintenance (\$35 per child);

These contributions allow the school to provide a qualified School Nurse and address maintenance issues quickly and effectively by an onsite Maintenance Officer. We know these services are highly valued by the school community. Regrettably, they are only possible through the contributions of the school's parents so we especially request your prioritisation of these to ensure their continuation.

3. Library fund (\$70 per child); and
4. Buildings fund (\$70 per child)

Families are asked to make voluntary contributions to both the school's Library Fund and Building Fund, which are fully tax deductible. These contributions are purpose bound, specifically to improve the School's learning facilities. In the past, due to the generous contribution of families like yours, we have re-modelled the school library and e-learning areas, repainted classrooms, installed air conditioning, improved the amenities and storage areas in the gymnasium, laid new carpet, as well as providing a well-stocked functional library space including new computers and new shelving.

## Due date for payments

We encourage you to read the Parent Payments Policy and attached information. Payments are due by **31<sup>st</sup> January 2020**. Timely payment of Parent Contributions assists in the efficient management of the school and ensures a smooth start to the year.

Payments are preferred online through the Compass Management System, however, payments can also be made by cash, EFTPOS, and BPAY.

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting payment requests. There are a range of support options available to parents including the State Schools' Relief Committee or the Camps and Excursions Fund. Families who are experiencing difficulty in making the requested payments are able to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the school. Please contact the Principal on 9571 6281 should you require assistance.

The parent payments and voluntary contributions are set out in the attached documentation. Your School Council appreciates the support received in the past and seeks the same in the future.

Yours sincerely,

.....  
Jim Giannopoulos  
School Council President

.....  
Robyn James  
Principal

# MALVERN PRIMARY SCHOOL 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- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

**Essential Student Learning Items** 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.

**Optional Items** 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 are required to pay for them.

### **Voluntary Financial Contributions**

Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. first-aid, school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial 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 Essential Student Learning 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 [School Policy and Advisory Guide](#).

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see:

[Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

# Understanding Parent Payment Categories

## Schools

### What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

### What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

### What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability  
Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

## Parents

### What may parents be asked to pay for?

#### Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems **essential** to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

#### Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
- textbooks, activity books, exercise books
  - stationery, book bags
  - student ID cards, locks
  - cooking ingredients students will consume
  - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
  - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

#### Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
- excursions
  - incursions
  - school sports
  - work placements

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items,  
Optional Items and  
Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

#### Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are **optional** and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

#### Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
- school magazines, class photos
  - functions, formals, graduation dinners
  - materials for extra curricular programs
  - student accident insurance

#### Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
- fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
  - fees for guest speakers
  - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
  - entry fees for school run performances

#### Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
- use of silver in metal work instead of copper
  - supplementary exam revision guides

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Schools can invite **Voluntary Financial Contributions** for



- e.g.
- Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
  - Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
  - General voluntary contributions

# Malvern Primary School 2020 - Parent Payment Charges

## Essential Student Learning Items

<p><b>Essential Items</b></p> <p>These funds are used to purchase and provide essential education items for student use such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• workbooks, photocopying and other resources such as Mathletics that are used by the students in the classroom.</li> <li>• additional materials and resources across specialist curriculum teaching areas eg: art supplies, Resilience project materials etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$320 per child</b></p>
<p><b>Excursions, Incursions and School Events</b></p> <p>In 2020 this will be treated separately and charged each term through Compass. Notifications will be sent out by the start of every term with information regarding payment for whole class excursions and incursions to complement the teaching and learning programs during that term.</p> <p>For reference, this charge was \$165 in 2019. Please note that this does not include the cost of swimming, camps or sport fees and buses.</p>	<p><b>To be charged separately each term in Compass</b></p>
<p><b>Sport buses for Grade 5 and 6</b></p> <p>The interschool sports program requires frequent travel by bus to different sporting venues. In 2020 this will be treated separately and charged each term through Compass. Notifications will be sent out by the start of every term with information regarding payment for that term.</p>	<p><b>To be charged separately each term in Compass</b></p>
<p><b>Digital Technologies</b></p> <p>This charge includes the purchase and replacement of equipment and technical support to keep all systems operational. The lesser charge at Grades 4, 5 and 6 is due to the 1:1 digital technologies program that operates at these grade levels.</p>	<p><b>\$130 per child (Grades Prep to 3)</b></p> <p><b>\$70 per child (Grades 4-6)</b></p>
<p><b>Digital Technologies Program- Grades 4, 5 and 6 – Payments are made directly to LWT through the online portal</b></p>	

## 2020 Parent Payments – Voluntary Contributions

<p><b>First aid</b></p> <p>We are lucky to have a qualified school nurse. Without your support of this role, the school would not be able to offer such high standards in first aid. The school nurse also provides allergy and diabetes management, health counselling, support to families, specialist assistance in case of emergency and first aid training for staff.</p>	<p><b>\$70 per child</b></p> <p><b>(Suggested Contribution)</b></p>
<p><b>Maintenance</b></p> <p>Our maintenance officer ensures that issues can be dealt with quickly and effectively. This assists in reducing the number of working bees we ask you to assist with and enhances and maintains the standards of the school's gardens.</p>	<p><b>\$35 per child</b></p> <p><b>(Suggested Contribution)</b></p>

<p><b>Library Fund</b></p> <p>Your contributions to the Library fund will go towards new computers, books and shelving.</p>	<p><b>\$70 per child</b>  <b>(Suggested Contribution)</b>  <b>(Tax Deductible)</b></p>
<p><b>Building Fund</b></p> <p>Your contributions to the Building fund will go towards improving and maintaining our buildings and will assist in completing our capital improvements to a high standard.</p>	<p><b>\$70 per child</b>  <b>(Suggested Contribution)</b>  <b>(Tax Deductible)</b></p>

### **FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS**

- *Second hand school clothing*
- *CSEF (Camps, Sport and Excursions Fund) – contact the office for eligibility*
- *State Schools Relief – contact the office for eligibility*

Please contact the office for your personal reference number.

### **CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP**

Contact the principal or assistant principal if experiencing financial hardship.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

The Parent Payment policy is distributed in hard copy to all families in November each year. Information is also available via the school website. Questions or concerns relating to the Parent Payment policy should be directed to the principal.

### **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

School Council reviews the policy on an annual basis, following feedback from teachers, parents and the finance sub-committee. Increases in parent payments, where applicable, are endorsed by council prior to the approval of the school budget. Parents are informed of payment increases following the School Council meeting where the increase was endorsed.

**Date of approval by School Council**

**November 2019**