2024 Parent Payment Letter from School Council

25 October 2023

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Cheltenham Primary School is looking forward to another great year of teaching and learning and would like to advise you of our voluntary financial contributions for 2024.

Attached to this *Letter from School Council* are the details re: parent payment arrangements and stationery packs.

In late 2021 the Department changed the wording of its policy and documentation from '**Essential Item Contributions'** to '**Curriculum Contributions'**. The revised policy, which is mandatory for all Victorian Schools, states that: '*Schools provide students with free instruction to fulfil the **standard** Victorian curriculum and we want to assure you that all contributions are voluntary*.'

School Council considers it is important for our CPS families to understand that if the change of wording from *essential* to *voluntary* is interpreted as "we no longer need your contribution" and payment is not received, many of the programs and resources we provide, will be at risk.

Our families pay the **Curriculum Contribution** because they understand that this funding helps our school deliver strong, diverse programs and high learning gain and support for all our students.

In consideration of the current difficult economic conditions, we have raised the amount by $10.00, after holding it at $370.00 for the past three years. This is considerably less than the CPI ($61.00) and equates *to just $1.95 a day!*

The curriculum delivered at Cheltenham is well above the 'standard' as evidenced by our 2023 NAPLAN results. In 2023 we were the highest performing school overall amongst the Beachside network of schools (33 primary schools).

How do our approaches differ from a 'standard' curriculum?

- The DET average class size is 26. The average class size in 2024 will be 22.0 students. Smaller class sizes mean our teachers can provide more individualised attention to every student.

- Significant resources, both human and financial are allocated to student wellbeing: the explicit teaching of social and emotional learning and growth mindset strategies; in place counsellors for students; Play Leaders and Better Me program. Feeling safe and secure in a supportive environment, directly impacts each child's capacity to achieve their academic potential.

- Science, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Performing Arts and *can* be taught in the classroom by generalist classroom teachers. This is what the 'standard' curriculum provides. At Cheltenham students go to specialist classes with specialists whose programs are unique, engaging and extend learning and practice.

- A 'standard' curriculum does not consider learning intervention and extension for students. At CPS we have the equivalent of 2.6 ongoing staff members supporting Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing/Inclusion in addition to the tutors funded by DET. This allows a personalisation of instruction and support that could not be achieved by a classroom teacher.

- Our Learning Specialists facilitate student excellence instructional groups for high achieving students in Literacy and Numeracy. All of this is above a 'standard' curriculum.

- There is no mandate to include incursions and special activities within a 'standard' curriculum. At Cheltenham we view these 'extras' as essential to providing rich and varied opportunities, which consider different perspectives and provide real world experiences for every child.

The payment schedule attached to this letter includes full details of what is included in the Curriculum Contribution: $380.00 for the year; $1.95 per day per student. Schools are no longer able to offer discounts for early payment.

Individual payment arrangements and support are always available on request for families experiencing hardship/financial difficulties.

We hope this communication encourages you to continue to make your usual contribution, towards a high-quality education at Cheltenham Primary School in 2024!

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cutting

School Council Treasurer

Bronwyn Morgan

Principal