

# CHELTENHAM SECONDARY COLLEGE



## PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

School Councils are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in the three categories – Essential Education Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial 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
- 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.

Cheltenham Secondary College spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.

Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

### **PARENT PAYMENT CATEGORIES**

**Essential Education Items** are those items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

These items include:

- materials that the student takes possession of, including 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
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

**Optional extras** are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis and if parents and guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- student computer printing for personal use
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes
- school-based performances, productions and events
- school magazines, class photographs.

**Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents or guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust.

### **Second-hand books and uniforms**

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the school makes second hand uniforms available at reduced costs. There are also online services such as [www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au) available for the recycling and trading of school items such as text books.

### Other support options

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist eligible parents, including State Schools Relief Committee and the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund. Further information on Financial Assistance is available on the Department of Education & Training (DET) website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/families.aspx>.

### Payment arrangements

Parents 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 weeks 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 with payments, three payment options have been developed:

- Option A Full amount at the beginning of Term 1
- Option B Four Payments – Payment scheduled just before the beginning of each Term
- Option C Other payment arrangements

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional extra or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

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

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

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

### Communication with families

The Parent Payment Policy and Implementation will be published on the College website. It will also be distributed to families each year along with the annual payment request. General enquiries regarding parent charges may be made to the College office on 9555 5955. Concerns should be directed in the first instance to the Business Manager.

### Monitoring and review of the implementation of the policy

The College Council (via the Finance Committee) will conduct an annual review of the implementation of the Parent Payment Policy including addressing any concerns raised by the College community. Any changes to the Policy Implementation will be reported back to the community via notice on the College website and report in the College Newsletter.

<i>POLICY NAME</i>	<i>DATE RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL</i>	<i>NEXT REVIEW DATE</i>
<i>Parent Payment Policy</i>	<i>July 2016</i>	<i>July 2018</i>