



Glen Katherine Primary School Parent Payment Policy & Implementation

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 student learning items, and voluntary financial contributions and optional education. It is the responsibility of the Glen Katherine Primary School Council to review the school charges and related parent payment policy on an annual basis to ensure the transparency of this process and to ensure that the policy sits within Department guidelines and community expectations.

Parent Payment Charges:

The Glen Katherine Primary School Council is 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 such as stationery items, textbooks, classroom supplies, attendance at curriculum related excursions/incursions, camps and sport. Parents may choose to provide Backpack essential stationary items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate in consultation with the School.
- **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 e.g. school magazine, district/regional sports events.
- **Voluntary Financial Contributions** - 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 Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

The attached diagram "**Understanding Parent Payment Categories**" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

Payment Arrangements & Methods

When the Glen Katherine Primary School Council 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.

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for Essential Student Learning Items, Optional items and Voluntary Financial Contributions. Payments can be made in instalments or by payment arrangement organised with our Parent Payment Contact Person, Jodee Jackson.

Costs will be kept to a minimum and payment requests will be fair and reasonable. We distribute Bookpacks the year before and ask that payment be received before Bookpacks are collected by students.

Reminders for unpaid Essential Student Learning Items or Optional Education Items 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.

If payment can't be made prior to Bookpack collection, alternative payment options are available through the school.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an Essential Student Learning Item, Optional Education item or Voluntary Financial Contribution.

Payment for all school related charges can be made in a variety of ways – our preferred method is Qkr, and Bpay, EFTPOS, Credit card, cash or cheque can also be used to enable all parents to have the choice of payment method that suits them the best.

Receipts will be issued to parents after payment has been processed.

Every year in November, all families will receive the Parent Letter re School Fees, the Parent Payment Policy, Understanding Parent Payment Categories Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions for Parents document which will also be available on the website.

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.

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

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 the Camps Sport & Excursion Fund (CSEF) and State Schools Relief Committee support. Glen Katherine also operates a second-hand uniform shop to support parents in meeting the costs of providing school uniforms.

Any families experiencing financial difficulties or need to discuss any concerns, are asked to contact our Parent Payment Contact person Jodee Jackson to confidentially discuss payment options and arrangements.

Please contact Jodee Jackson on 9431 1599 or jackson.jodee.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

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

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