Fairfield Primary School

Parent Payment Policy

Rationale:

Fairfield Primary School is committed to the provision of quality education, in accordance with our values of excellence, creativity and respect. This is provided through the partnership between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and our community.

The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program, and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and raise funds.

School councils are responsible for developing and approving a school-level policy which covers essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

Definitions: These payments fall into five categories:

1. **Essential Education Items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. for stationery, photocopying, texts, use of specialist equipment)

2. **Excursion Levy** this levy is to cover the costs of excursions and school based programs your child attends throughout the year. The excursions are based on the curriculum taught over the school year. Each area team will plan ahead and provide an outline of the expected excursions, incursions and events. This levy overcomes parents having to pay individual amounts on an ongoing basis. *Please note:* School camps are extra activities that are itemised separately each year.

3. **Sport Levy** covers school and interschool sport, membership of School Sport Victoria and transportation to some sporting events.

4. **Optional Extras** are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may choose whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. for school magazines or extracurricular programs or activities)

5. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which parents and guardians may be invited to donate to the school (e.g. for grounds beautification, additional computers).

Principal and School Councils have the responsibility of making sure that no student is disadvantaged if parents are unable to make payments.

Aim:
To ensure that parent payments are made in accordance with the requirements of DEECD policy.

Implementation:

1. The School Council approves the annual school budget and fee structure for the following year.

2. Payment arrangements will be communicated to families.

3. Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for Essential Education Items, Optional Extras, Voluntary Financial Contributions, Excursion and Sport Levies.

4. Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, payment options will be developed by School Council.

5. Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.
6. Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemised and the category each items falls under will be clearly identified as an Essential Education Item, Optional Extras, Excursion Levy, Sports Levy or Voluntary Financial Contribution.

7. Receipts will be issued to parents upon making payment.

8. The School Council will develop appropriate sensitive procedures to govern the collection of fees.

9. Reminders for unpaid Essential Education Items, Optional Extras, Excursion and Sport Levies will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

10. Only the initial invitation for Voluntary Financial Contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians.

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

**Education Maintenance Allowance**

A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who holds an eligible Centrelink benefit and a Health Care Card or pension card, may be entitled to the Education Maintenance Allowance. The annual allowance amount is split evenly between the parents and the school.

Parents have the option of providing Essential Education Items themselves or can authorise the school to direct the school’s portion of the family’s EMA towards particular items.

The school’s portion of the EMA will be put towards the cost of Essential Education Items.

Parents are entitled to know how the EMA is being used for their child’s education. The school will advise parents and guardians of the itemised cost of student materials and services on which they propose to spend the EMA.

The school’s portion of the EMA will not be used to offset voluntary financial contributions.

Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year will be returned to the parent/guardian unless there is agreement reached with the parent/guardian that this money can be carried over into the next year.

The school will manage the parent payment arrangements to coincide with the timing of the availability of Education Maintenance Allowance.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

**References:**

DEECD finance policy.


This policy was ratified by School Council in November 2011