



# ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL

## POLICY DOCUMENT

### *Parent Payments*

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 empowers school councils to charge fees to families for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children. As the quality and variety of educational programs offered at Eltham High School are enhanced by doing so, our School Council requests payment from families for some student material and services. The school also invites additional voluntary contributions to support building and maintenance works throughout the school. The purpose of this Policy is to explain the school's approach to family payments.

#### PHILOSOPHY

The Victorian Government provides most of the school's requirements in the form of salaries, land, building infrastructure and maintenance. The Government also provides most funding for curriculum and some student services. However, a total reliance on Government funds does not allow the school to deliver the enhanced educational program and the student services that our community expects. Therefore, Eltham High School Council, requests that parents make a contribution so that enhanced educational programs and student services can continue to be available to our students.

#### POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with DET Policy and guidelines, payments are requested by parents under three payment categories:

- 1. Essential Educational Items:** These are items or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are required to provide, or pay the school to provide. These items include but are not limited to locker hire, student id cards, school planners, printing credits, text or resource books and student stationery, materials for learning where the student consumes or takes temporary or permanent possession of the finished article (eg food technology, photography, design & technology, art subjects etc., camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend), PE Uniform (where applicable) and activities associated with, but not part of instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as the Year 12 practice exams which all students are expected to attend
- 2. Optional extras:** These are items provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user pays basis and if parents/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them. These items include materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program such as the school magazine, extra-curricular programs or activities. e.g. instrumental music, camps and excursions, year 12 formal, school based performances, productions and events. This also includes materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable. School facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the SRP such as the hire or lease of musical instruments.
- 3. Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents/guardians, or anyone else, can be invited to make as a donation to the school, for example to the Building Fund or General School Contribution.

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

# 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

No student will be treated differently, denied access or refuse instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

Families requesting students to participate in 'Optional Extra subjects and programs, which include but are not limited to the instrumental music tuition and instrument hire, interstate and overseas study experiences, year 12 formal – must meet the full cost of the activity. Non payment of program fees (Music/Drama/Volleyball) will result in your child being denied access to the program until past due fees/instalments are met (need to come to a decision about how we will handle and note). Non payment of Elective Fees may result in the school offering your student an alternative subject that does not incur additional cost or your student being restricted from key course materials and activities covered by the levy. Alternatively this may result in your child having to make arrangements outside of school to meet the requirements of the course. In cases of financial hardship, payment plans may be entered into and adhered to in order to allow your child to continue to participate in the program/elective.

Eltham High School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to best meet the needs of our students.

School Council expects that the Essential Education Items payments will be made before or at the same time as any Optional Education Items

#### **GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

- Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.
- Costs will be kept to a minimum with payment requests/letters fair and reasonable.  
Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians.
- Payments may be requested prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- 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.
- All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payment by parents and guardians are kept confidential.
- To further assist parents, payment options are available

Families in financial difficulties are invited to discuss instalment payment arrangements with the School Cashier on 9430 5118

#### **Other support options available to families experiencing financial difficulties**

Camps Sport and Excursion Funding

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/csef/Home.aspx>

Saver Plus Program

<http://www.anz.com/about-us/corporate-sustainability/community/investing/saver-plus/>

A Start in Life Program

<http://www.astartinlife.org.au/>

Good Shepherd Microfinance

<http://goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/no-interest-loan-scheme-nils/>

Sustainable School Shop

[www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au)

State Schools Relief

**BASIS OF DISCRETION**

Minor modifications to this policy may be made at the discretion of the Principal and School Council Treasurer.

**RELATED POLICIES**

DET Parent Payment Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

**REVIEW**

This policy should be reviewed every 3 years.

Date Endorsed: 20 / 3 / 2019

**Executive Officer**

Eltham High School Council

*CONSULTATION PROCESS AND WORKING PARTY INFORMATION:*

**This policy was written by: Lauren Keenan**

**Consultation has taken place with the relevant group(s) in the following list:**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Consultation</b> ✓
School Operations Committee	
Staff	
Students (randomly selected group)	
Parents – Finance Committee	✓
Members of the Community	
Other (where relevant please specify)	
Planning and Policy Review Team of Council <b>(Mandatory)</b>	✓

School Council (Mandatory)	✓
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