

Parent/Guardian Payments

Rationale

The current Education & Training Reform Act empowers School Councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds. As the quality and variety of educational programs offered by our school are enhanced by doing so, our School Council requests payment from parents for certain student materials and service charges, and for voluntary financial contributions.

Aim

- To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents/guardians.

Implementation Strategies

- School Council supplements Department of Education & Training funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items:-
 1. **Essential Education Items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide eg. Stationary booklists, text books and uniforms, camps, swimming etc.
 2. **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user pays basis and parents can choose whether or not their child participates eg. School magazine, religious education, instrumental music tuition or instrument hire etc.
- In addition, School Council invites parents to make donations by means of:-
 3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which are non-compulsory donations for specific projects eg. Library resources, grounds projects or technologies equipment.
- Parents will be made aware of the maximum costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by December of the previous year, along with a recommended payments schedule.
- The payment schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate) and essential payment dates. Options to make payment by instalments, clear definitions of the category of any payments (ie. Essential, Optional or Voluntary), and advice to parents to contact the Principal if they require support or additional information.
- All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where payments have or have not been received will not occur.

Parent Payments

- All costs and processes associated with parent payments and voluntary contributions will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to Department of Education & Training requirements, and will be within the expectations of the school community.
- As with all parent payments to the school, Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal.
- Invoices for unpaid **Essential Items** and **Optional Extras** will be sent out at the beginning of each term as per DET guidelines, with requests for **Voluntary Financial Contributions** to occur in February and July (if required) each year.
- Unpaid **Essential Items** payments will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family. Unpaid **Optional Extra** payments may compromise a student's ability to be involved in the optional activity in the future. Unpaid **Voluntary Financial Contributions** do not constitute a non-payment and will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family.
- No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents or students.
- Our school will consider requests for partial or full refunds of parent payments on a case-by-case basis taking into account the individual circumstances. Generally we will not be able to refund parent payments made for items purchased or costs that have already been paid where those funds have already been transferred to a third party. For example, camp costs when a child becomes unwell and cannot attend in circumstances where the payment has already been made to a third party and no refund is available to the school. Where possible, we will make this clear to parents at the time of payment.
- Parents who make voluntary contributions will receive letters of appreciation.
- The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to it.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle. School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually, and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from DET.

Version: *Final*

Ratified at School Council: *20/11/2018*

Review Date: *19/11/2019*

'Sunshine SDS is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices heard about decisions that affect their lives'.

