


Policy: Parent Payments		
<p>Date of Review: October 2019</p> <p>Responsible for review: <i>Finance Committee</i></p>	<p>Bright P-12 College Council Policy</p> 	<p>Date Approved: October 2019</p> <p>Approving Authority: College Council</p>
<p>Associated Processes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>School Level Processes Parent Payments</i> 	<p>Reference Guide: FINANCE</p>	<p>Associated Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Parent Payment Categories Flowchart</i> 2. <i>Bright P-12 College Fees and Charges</i>

Policy Statement

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

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 education items and voluntary financial contributions.

Principles/Objectives

- 1.1 costs are kept to a minimum
- 1.2 payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories
- 1.3 items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- 1.4 no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution
- 1.5 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
- 1.6 Bright P-12 College spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.
- 1.7 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 Charges

- 1. 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.

- 2. Optional education items** (or non-essential materials and services) 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, PRIOR to taking possession of the item***

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.

- 3. 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.

Payment arrangements

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. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

Option A	Full amount at the beginning of Term 1
Option B	Payment at the beginning of each Term for certain items eg Bus Fares
Option C	Half yearly payment(start of Terms 1 & 3) for Semester based subjects
Option D	Other payment arrangements – payment plans by arrangement

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. 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.

Family support options & Consideration of Hardship

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 State Schools Relief Committee support; Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund; Parents & Friends Foundation. Parents who may be experiencing Financial Difficulty can contact the Assistant Principal via email : Jacobsen.kelli.k@edumail.vic.gov.au or burton.scott.s@edumail.vic.gov.au or by telephone 03 5755 1166 or come to the school office and arrange a confidential meeting.

The Finance Assistant and / or Assistant Principal can provide application forms for CSEF / State Schools Relief.

There are also online services such as Recycle Bright available for the recycling and trading of school items such as text books and uniform.

Communication with Families

A copy of the parent payment policy will be placed on the College website. Following review of the parent payment policy the school community will be notified via Compass; School Website and the School newsletter.

Any parents who have general enquiries may raise these with the Finance Assistant at the office. In the event of concerns or complaints are not addressed families are encouraged to raise these with the Principal via email or by making an appointment at the Office.

Refund Policy

Our school will consider requests for partial or full refunds of payments made by parents on a case-by-case basis taking into account the individual circumstances. Generally, we will not be able to refund payments made for items purchased or costs that have already been paid where those funds have already been committed or 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 or committed to a third party and no refund is available to the school. Or where a student exits during the school year a refund (or pro-rata refund) cannot be made for computer applications.

Monitoring & Review of the Policy – Roles & Responsibilities

2.1 The Principal is responsible for:

- The implementation of Bright P-12 College policies and procedures.
- Ensure Bright P-12 College Council comply with DET guidelines

2.2 The Assistant Principal is responsible for:

- Meeting with families experiencing hardship and providing them with additional support options
- Establishing payment plans for families in conjunction with the Finance Assistant

2.3 The Bright P-12 College Council is responsible for:

- Annual review of College Council Policies and procedures
- Monitoring College Council Fees & Charges to comply with the Parent Payments Policy
- Approve all Fees & Charges annually

2.4 The Business Manager is responsible for:

- Complying with Bright P-12 College Council Policies and procedure
- Ensuring administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting

2.5 The Finance Assistant is responsible for:

- Ensuring payment requests, letters or CASES21 invoices for student materials and services charges must be accompanied by the following information:
 - a description of each of the three parent payment categories
 - details of what parents are being asked to pay for
 - that parents are required to provide essential education items for their children, and have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate
 - the availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the principal if the parent wishes to discuss these
 - a copy of the school-level policy.

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- invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.
 - only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice per year is sent to all parents/guardians.
 - receipts are issued to parents immediately upon payment and receipted on CASES 21.
 - Discussing and organising payment options with parents in consultation with the Assistant Principal
 - Following up any non-payments with families