



Ringwood Secondary College

Parent Payment and Voluntary Contributions Policy

Version No: 6

Date: December 2014

Committee: Policy and Education

Rationale:

As required by the Department of Education and Training (DET), Ringwood Secondary College will comply with the Parent Payments in Victorian Schools Policy which was issued in conjunction with Circular S381-2007 on October 16, 2007, and revised guidelines issued in June 2008.

Aims:

The College aims to:

- Improve high quality learning and extracurricular opportunities for all students by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.
- Maximise collection of fees and charges within appropriate guidelines

Implementation Guidelines:

College Council will supplement DET funds by requesting payments from parents for the following:

Essential Education Items

These are items which parents/guardians pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate. These items are essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program and include:

- materials that the individual student takes possession of, such as 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 (where applicable)
- activities associated with, but not part of instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. transport and entrance costs).

Note: If parents/guardians choose to provide equivalent materials themselves, this should be done in consultation with the school, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school. However, there are some items (e.g. food provisions for home economics) which, due to their nature, can only be provided by the school.

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:

- instructional support material, resources and administration in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. student computer printing for personal use)
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music)

- school-based performances, productions and events
- materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable (eg the use of more expensive materials)
- materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. school magazines)
- school facilities and equipment not associated with providing the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the SRP (eg student accident insurance, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents/guardians, or other members of the community can be invited to make a donation to the school for the following purposes:

- contributions to a building trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund (these trust funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax deductible)
- contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (eg equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers or student-related services
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

The College will provide parents with early notice of requests for payment of Essential Education items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions, ie a minimum of 6 weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year. Payment may be requested, but not required, prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment arrangements will coincide with the timing of the availability of Government Assistance packages eg Education Maintenance Allowance or its equivalent.

The College will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment.

The College will ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents/guardians are confidential.

Parents who have difficulty paying for essential items will be directed to a range of support options, including:

- a) Student Services Team
- b) Designated Government assistance program including rebate and allowance schemes

Payment Arrangements and Non-payment:

- a) All students will have access to the standard curriculum program;
- b) Students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions;
- c) Parents and guardians will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp;
- d) 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;
- e) Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be sent to all parents and guardians;
- f) Under no circumstances will collectors of any type including debt collectors, be used by the College to obtain any funds from parents and guardians;

- g) The Principal will ensure any records of payment and contribution by parents and guardians is kept confidential;
- h) The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have not made a payment or financial contribution is deemed unacceptable and will not occur in any circumstances;
- i) The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to its implementation.
- j) It is the expectation of the College that students and their families who elect to participate in co-curricular activities, such as overseas and interstate trips, or the College Deb Ball, will have made arrangements to pay for Essential Education Items.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed annually, especially the components relating to the purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions, so that it is consistent with any updated advice from DET.