

### Vision

Fitzroy High School values children as individual learners who are full of potential and capable of excellence. Our students will be lifelong learners, reflective and creative thinkers, responsible and active citizens, and resilient and adaptable problem solvers able to navigate through an uncertain and constantly changing future. Fitzroy is a learning community where students and teams of teachers work together to:

- Achieve high standards so that all students fulfil their capabilities in academic, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development
- Celebrate diversity and embrace individual differences, including class, culture, race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity
- Build a cohesive, compassionate and proud school community with a productive legacy for the future
- Develop beyond our current capacity through continuous change and review
- Participate in and contribute to our wider community.

### Parent Payments

#### Principles

- **Educational value:** Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent payments practices
- **Access, equity and inclusion:** All students have access to the standard curriculum program and participation of all students to the full school program is facilitated
- **Affordability:** Cost to parents is kept to a minimum and is affordable for most families at the school
- **Engagement and Support:** Early identification and engagement strategies by the school ensure parents are well informed of the payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship
- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **Transparency and Accountability:** School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils

School council seeks to supplement Department of Education and Training resources with a variety of locally raised funds, including parent payments. 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 student learning items, optional items and voluntary financial contributions.

Generally, parent payments may be charged as subject contributions (eg: class sets of texts, consumable items such as ingredients for Food Studies), or as a service levy (eg: excursion and incursion charges, locker charges). Any charge must not exceed the cost of providing those materials or services to students.

No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution. However, unless the relevant parent payment is paid the student may not be provided with the higher cost materials or services relating to that subject. Only students whose parents/care givers pay for essential educational items will be permitted to attend non-essential high cost extra-curricula activities eg. Overseas trips.

Locally raised funds add significantly to the school's ability to provide a diverse and high quality curriculum and provide a diverse range of high quality learning opportunities for all students.

Early in term 4 of each year, the Finance committee, after consulting with subject coordinators and other relevant staff members, will make recommendations to school council regarding proposed parent payments for the following year.

School council will only consider submissions for parent payments consistent with current departmental guidelines eg: Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

The purpose and amount charged for school levies will be decided by school council, and communicated to parents as part of the school's book list during December of each year.

The provision of student reports cannot be conditional upon parent payments or voluntary contribution.

Items made by students during subjects for which the parents have contributed financially become the property of the student.

Where a parent/caregiver pays for a specific purpose, the school may not use the funds for any other purpose without the consent of parents.

As with all parent/caregiver payments to the school, school council will provide opportunities for all parents/caregivers experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the principal and/or Business Manager to pay school levies.

School council will make clear distinctions between voluntary contributions and those materials and services which parents are required to pay, so that parents are not confused regarding the voluntary nature of the contributions.

The public identification of students or their parents/caregivers where voluntary contributions have or have not been paid will not occur.

School council requests for voluntary contributions will be kept to a reasonable level and within expectations of the school community.

School Council will provide all parents/caregivers with information detailing the purposes for which voluntary contributions are being collected.

As with all parent payments to the school, school council will provide opportunities for all parents/caregivers experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the principal when making voluntary contributions.

Unpaid Voluntary Contributions do not constitute outstanding debts.

Finance Subcommittee will recommend annual amount of voluntary contribution request to School Council and that parents/caregivers will be asked in writing for payment of the voluntary contribution. One follow-up letter may be sent.

The Parent Payment Policy will be available on the school website and Compass. The School Council sends a letter annually to accompany the school charges. This letter will refer to the policy and how it can be accessed. The school will inform parents/carers of how they may raise any issues, make general inquiries about charges and the contact details where complaints can be referred via Compass notices.

## **Parent Payment Categories**

### **1. Essential student learning items**

Essential education items are those items, activities or services that are essential to support the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

These items include:

- Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of, for example textbooks, stationery, ID cards, locks, materials for final products
- Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend, for example excursions, incursions, school sports, travel.

2. **Optional items** are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support student learning of the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them.

These items include:

- Items the student purchases or hires, for example class photos, functions, formals
- Activities the student purchases for example instrumental music tuition, fees for guest speakers, camps, school performances
- Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

### 3. Voluntary Financial Contributions

Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services that parents and guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for student well being, library or building trust. The quality and variety of *educational programs* offered by our school are enhanced if departmental funds are supplemented by voluntary contributions.

#### Support options

Fitzroy High School makes every effort to keep the cost and number of items that need to be purchased to a minimum. We also try to ensure that the costs are affordable for all parents.

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. If you will have difficulty making payments, please contact Sue Farrell (Business Manager), telephone 9488 1900, to discuss possible support options and flexible payment arrangements. Any information about your financial circumstances, payment arrangements or status will be kept strictly confidential.

A range of other support options are available to assist parents, including second hand options for textbooks, the Camps Sports Excursion Fund (CSEF), the State Schools Relief support and the FHS Scholarship fund.

#### Payment arrangements

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (a minimum of six weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year).

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Option A | Full amount (paid through Compass)  |
| Option B | Payment debited on the 5 <sup>th</sup> day of each month (Paid through Compass) |
| Option C | Other, payment arrangements   |

Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items 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 to parents and guardians.

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

#### Evaluation:

This implementation of this policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle. The effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy will be monitored at least annually as part of the ongoing improvement and report back to the school community. School council will review the level and purpose of voluntary contributions annually.

<b>Date Implemented</b>	November 2016
<b>Author/s</b>	Sue Farrell, Business Manager, John Melia (former School Council president), Pauline Rice, Principal
<b>Approved By</b>	Finance Committee, School Council
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Kath Boyer School Council President Date: 18 October 2016
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	October 2016
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	School Council finance sub-committee
<b>Review Date</b>	October 2017
<b>References</b>	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx</a>