

# ORBOST SECONDARY COLLEGE

## PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

### **Rationale:**

Orbost Secondary College is committed to providing the best possible educational opportunities for all students.

Parent Contributions make it possible for the School to maintain its high standard of education in quality facilities.

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 grants School Councils the power to charge fees for goods and services to support the delivery of free instruction and to raise funds.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have issued a “Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Policy” which includes descriptions of what constitutes free education and for which items Schools are able to request Parent Contributions.

### **Aims:**

- To provide students of Orbost Secondary College with a high standard of education, access to quality facilities and specialized programs.
- To allow School Council to establish a structure for School charges.
- To ensure compliance with the Education and Training reform Act 2006, DEECD policy and guideline documents.

### **Implementation:**

- School Council will, each year in September, determine the applicable amounts that parents/guardians of students attending Orbost Secondary College are requested to contribute towards Essential Educational Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions.
- The School will comply with the DEECD policy and guidelines for Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools 2008, and undertake the implementation and administration of this policy in line with the Guidelines.

### **In particular Orbost Secondary College will:**

- Ensure parent payments are set at levels not exceeding the cost of the materials and/or services being provided.
- Parent payments will only be set under the categories of Essential Educational Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions.
- Parents/guardians will be provided with notice of requested payments in early November of the preceding school year.
- A range of payment options will be freely available and flexible arrangements may be requested in special circumstances.
- CASES 21 Finance package will be utilized at all times to accurately record all transactions, and provide reports/statements etc.
- Parent/guardian/student details will remain confidential and only used for legitimate purposes within the School.
- Communication with parents will primarily be via the Parent Newsletters and Family Statements, which will be provided to all families each term.
- All students will be treated equally and have access to the standard curriculum.

### **PARENT PAYMENT CATEGORIES:**

Essential Education Items (EEI) are those items 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. A detailed list of items appears on the Charge sheet for each year level and the books and general items on the booklists.

These items include but are not limited to:

- materials that the student takes possession of e.g. student stationery, project materials etc;
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. home economics, ceramics, photography, catering, arts, wood, textiles etc);
- transport and entrance for excursions, incursions and sports venues which all students are expected to attend within their subject areas.

**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 extra 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.

These items include but are not limited to:

- student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use;
- extra-curricular programs or activities eg instrumental music, sporting facilities entry;
- school-based performance, productions and events;
- travel in school car or bus, access to sporting facilities for curriculum activities;
- use of extra-curricular equipment such as canoes, packs, fees for guest speakers and performances and
- school magazines, newsletters, student planners, locker usage.

**Voluntary financial contributions** (Donations) are for those items and services for which parents and guardians are invited to make a donation to the school. Voluntary financial contributions may be invited for the following purposes:

- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP. This may include additional computers, beautification of school grounds or student related services.
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

### **Other support options**

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 parents, including: State Schools Relief Committee support, Welfare support agencies, Youth Allowance, Abstudy, an Scholarships.

### **State Schools Relief Committee**

Support via the Student Wellbeing officers to assist with shoes/uniforms.

### **Welfare support agencies**

Welfare support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families.

### **Youth Allowance**

A needs based assistance scheme called YOUTH ALLOWANCE is available which provides an allowance for students aged 16 years, and a higher allowance for those 18 years and over. Payment is subject to a Means Test on the student's family income; almost certainly the children of parents who are Health Care Card Holders will qualify, many others will also be eligible. Please Note: Application Forms for this Commonwealth Scheme are available from Centrelink.

### **Abstudy**

Abstudy provides help with costs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who are studying at a secondary school as well as for an apprenticeship or full time study.

Abstudy can be claimed by ringing 132317.

### **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).

- Every effort is made to ensure that College payments are kept to a minimum, with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable.
- The College has a variety of mechanisms to help parents/guardians in making their payments which are:
  - Cash / EFTPOS / Cheque
  - Credit Card (which can be used either in person or over the phone)
  - BPay – See student C21 Statement for BPay details
  - EFT to School Bank – Contact General Office for Account details..
- Centrepay - Setting up a regular payment through Centrelink of \$20 (minimum) per fortnight to the family school account means payments can be made for excursions, camps etc without having to remember. Any surplus at the end of the student's schooling will be refunded to parents.
- Scholarship (if your student has one)
- Any parent/guardian needing financial assistance with any aspect of the education provided by the College is very welcome to discuss the matter directly with the Principal or Business Manager by phoning 5154 1084
- Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment. A financial statement can be requested at anytime.
- Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians.
- 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 Term.
- All students have access to the standard curriculum program
- Students are not treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for educational items, services or voluntary financial contributions
- Parents and guardians are provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp
- All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

### **Parent Payment Policy Communication with parents**

Initial payment requests, letters or CASES21 invoices for student materials and services charges must be accompanied by the following information:

- That parents/guardians are required to provide essential education items for their students, and have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate
- A clear description of each of the three parent payment categories
- The availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the Principal or Business Manager if a parent wishes to discuss these details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school
- A copy of this policy

### **Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year policy cycle.

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*School Council President*

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*Principal*

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in....

August 2014