WERRIBEE PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT/GUARDIAN PAYMENT POLICY

RATIONALE

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.

Werribee Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. The stationery packs contain high quality materials at a competitive price due to our ability to bulk order.

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.

No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PAYMENT CATEGORIES

Essential education items 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.

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, ceramics, photography, catering);
- school uniform;
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

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.

These items include:

- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. swimming program, instrumental music
- school-based performances, productions and events
- school magazines, newsletters, class photographs
- camps/excursions.

Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services that parents and guardians are invited to make a donation to the school. At Werribee Primary School we use voluntary contributions for: Library (ie. additional books and resources), Buildings & Grounds (ie. gardens and seating), ICT (ie. purchase of computers/equipment), Curriculum (ie. sporting equipment, teaching requisites and resources), Other (additional voluntary contribution)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

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 the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and State Schools Relief Committee support.
**Education Maintenance Allowance**

The Education Maintenance Allowance provides assistance to low-income families by helping with the costs associated with the education of their children up to the age of 16.

EMA is a means-tested payment - parents must hold a Centrelink/Veterans Affairs concession card valid on the first day of Term 1 and Term 3 to be eligible for both instalments.

Parents can elect to have their EMA paid in one of the following ways:
- paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into the parent’s bank account; or
- paid to the school to be held as credit which the parent can use towards education expenses; or
- paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection.

The Pension Concession Card (PCC) or Health Care Card (HCC) is subject to electronic confirmation with Centrelink to verify that the cardholder is receiving a benefit.

Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year will be returned to the parent/guardian unless there is agreement reached with the parent/guardian that this money can be carried over into the next year.

The school will manage the parent payment arrangements to coincide with the timing of the availability of Education Maintenance Allowance.

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**PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

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

Parents and guardians will be provided with as early as possible notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

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

Payments should be made prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment methods available are: EMA, Cash/Cheque, BPAY, Credit/Debit card at office, Direct Deposit.

If any families will have difficulty making payment they are encouraged to make an appointment with either the Principal or Assistant Principal/s to discuss possible support options and flexible payment arrangements.

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.

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

This policy was approved at School Council Meeting on: 19 November 2013

Next Review Due: November 2014