Parent Payments Policy – School communication to parents

Communicating the Parent Payments Policy to parents

Brentwood Park is looking forward to providing a high-quality teaching and learning program in 2023 and would like to inform you of the voluntary contributions for 2023.

General Statement

- The Department of Education and Training has sought to clarify the Parent Payments Policy to remove any ambiguity relating to parents' financial contributions to schools.
- Changes to how schools request contributions have been made accordingly.

Why are parent payment arrangements different now?

- The Department of Education and Training reviewed parent contribution practices across a significant number of schools last year and found some inconsistency in the way contributions were being requested and managed.

- In recognition of this, the Department has now made changes to how schools seek contributions to align practices across the system and ensure consistency. The intent is to ensure parents and schools use common terminology and have a shared understanding around parent payment arrangements.

What is specifically different?

Parent Payment Categories

- The categories under which contributions will be requested have been changed to align with the purpose of the payment:

    - **Curriculum Contributions** (previously known as Essential Student Learning Items) support items and activities that help deliver fundamental curriculum or subject learning e.g., General classroom materials and equipment

    - **Other Contributions** (previously known as Voluntary Contributions) support the school's operation and function more generally e.g., Parent communication tools and school building enhancements
    - Payments for **Extra-Curricular Items and Activities** (previously known as Optional Items) provide for items and activities over and above what is needed to deliver fundamental curriculum learning. These *user-pays* contributions enhance the schooling experience for students e.g., Optional camps, excursions, and events

A new template for communicating arrangements

- A template is used by all schools to communicate parent payment arrangements. The template includes the new category names to clearly define the purpose of parent payment requests and includes a one-page overview of the policy.

New payment procedures

- Schools do not send out invoices and statements for **Curriculum** and **Other** Contributions.

- Parents simply view contribution requests at the beginning of the year, then make their contributions using the payment methods provided. Brentwood Park uses the XUNO app to manage the payment process. This automatically generates a receipt.

- **Extra-Curricular Items and Activities**, such as camps, excursions, special events and other activities or items, will also be paid through XUNO.

Communicating the voluntary nature and importance of contributions

- **Curriculum** and **Other** contributions are voluntary.

- We continue to value your contributions in supporting our school's programs and resources.

- Your contributions continue to assist us to broaden the educational experience for our students. It has allowed us to provide:
- digital learning opportunities for example- class iPad sets
- provide high quality resources beyond the basic standard (for all curriculum areas taught – For example, high quality fiction and non-fiction books for Reading)
- provision of a wide range of sporting equipment

  Without your contributions, many of these things may not be possible.

- If you are unable or choose not to make financial contributions, your child will not be disadvantaged or denied access to the resources required to deliver the curriculum. We will always provide students with free instruction to fulfil the standard Victorian curriculum.

- For **Extra-Curricular Items and Activities**, it is up to you whether you wish for your child to have the item/participate in the activity.

- These are optional and provided on a user-pays basis, and so the school will require a parent payment to provide them to individual students.

- For some educational items (e.g. devices, stationery) it makes sense for parents to purchase them from a third-party provider, so students can take personal ownership for use at school and/or at home. The school considers the necessity of these items, the cost and preferred suppliers. The school has pre-negotiated prices for stationary packs through Berwick Newsagency, our preferred stationery supplier.

- Our school only requests contributions for items that we believe add value to the school experience for students.

- The contributions go specifically towards items and activities that help improve your child's educational experience.

Schools provide students with free instruction to fulfil the standard Victorian curriculum and we want to assure you that all contributions are voluntary. Nevertheless, the ongoing support of our families ensures that our school can offer the best possible education and support for our students. We want to thank you for all your support. This has made a huge difference to our school and the programs we can offer.

The environment and resources that we enjoy today represent the contributions made by our parent/carer community over many years. Parent/Carers voluntary contributions make significant difference to the quality of our programs. This financial support ensures that we can continue to provide the excellent range of facilities and resources for your children. Your support will continue to allow us to:

- provide high quality programs and specific subject materials and equipment for: English, Mathematics, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, Inquiry, Language-Chinese Mandarin and H&PE.
- maintain and develop the school grounds and playgrounds.
- ensure the upkeep of our computer devices to enhance learning opportunities.
- maintain high quality books to develop reading skill.
- provide hands on maths equipment e.g. concrete materials for teaching purposes.
- facilitate online digital subscriptions, e.g. Inquisitive, You can Do It!
- provide a range of sporting equipment.
- offer effective First Aid for all students.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Bell
Principal

Lindy Penrose
School Council President

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL:

Policy last reviewed	14/2/2023
Consultation	Consultation with school council and approved by School Council
Approved by	James Bell, principal

Next scheduled review date	February 2024