



Carlton North Primary School Parent Payment Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) Parent Payments Policy
http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schacc/Parent_payments_policy_2008-pol-v1.00.pdf

Rationale

Carlton North Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that a high standard of education for our students is maintained through the provision of materials, equipment and facilities. This is achieved through the allocation of resources (human, financial and physical) in accordance with the goals and priorities outlined in our Strategic Plan.

As is the case with most comparable primary schools, funding to the school from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to **provide free instruction** covers only staff salaries and basic running costs. To **support the delivery of free instruction**, DEECD expects schools to supplement this funding with various categories of locally raised funds: parent payments, voluntary contributions and fundraising events. To enable CNPS to maintain a higher quality program that delivers more than just the minimum standard we ask for parents' and guardians' full support to generate the additional funds required to deliver these resources and services. This policy outlines Carlton North Primary School's processes for requesting parent payments and voluntary contributions.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that parents and guardians are fully informed of the different categories of payments that will be requested and what parents and guardians can expect the school to do in regard to making parent payment requests.

Implementation

DEECD identifies two categories for which parents and guardians are expected to make a payment or contribution:

- **essential education items**, which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child. They include materials for learning that the individual student takes possession of or consumes such as stationery and reading bags, and essential services such as costs associated with camps, swimming program and excursions that are part of the standard curriculum program and which all students are expected to attend.
- **optional education items**, which are not part of the standard curriculum, are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may choose whether their child accesses or participates in. For example, extra-curricular programs such as lunchtime chess or instrumental music ensembles.

In addition parents and guardians are **invited** to donate **voluntary financial contributions** to the school. **Voluntary financial contributions** are contributions made by parents and guardians of a student enrolled at the school which are used for the following purposes:

- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (e.g. equipment, facilities, materials or services) in addition to those funded by DEECD. This may include the purchase of additional computers for classrooms, electronic whiteboards and other teaching aids
- Contributions to the school for a general purpose or;
- contributions to the library fund (to provide library resources) or building fund (to maintain and improve school buildings). These funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and contributions are tax deductible.

Carlton North Primary School will ensure that:

- all students have access to the standard curriculum program
- all requests for payment are fair and reasonable
- parents and guardians are provided with early notice of requests for payment of essential education items
- parents and guardians are provided with two weeks' notice of requests for payment of optional education items
- the advice to parents/guardians provides a clear description of the payment categories and which category items fall under and that where appropriate, parents/guardians have the option of purchasing certain items themselves
- the costs of items that students consume or take possession of and excursions and camps are reasonable and based on reliable estimates
- payment arrangements for essential items will coincide with the timing of the availability of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for eligible parents/guardians
- there is a clearly articulated process for the administration of the EMA
- the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents and guardians is confidential
- parents/guardians are informed of the possibility of alternative payment options and invited to contact the Principal if they wish to discuss these options
- non-payment of optional education items by the due date, without alternative arrangements agreed with the Principal, will be taken as withdrawal of the student from those optional activities
- parents/guardians are provided with a receipt within a reasonable timeframe after payment
- all payments are receipted in the DEECD administration system (CASES21)
- details of how Voluntary Contributions are intended to be spent is provided by the school
- a copy of this policy is available to all parents/guardians via the office and Lee4Us.

For any of these parent payments or voluntary financial contributions, the school will not:

- insist on payment prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used
- withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions
- issue more than one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice
- coerce or harass parents and guardians to obtain payment
- send invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents more than once a month
- pressure parents/guardians to sign over their portion of the EMA
- under any circumstances use collectors of any type, including debt collectors, to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

EVALUATION

When evaluating this policy the school will:

- consult current DEECD policy and guidelines on parent payments;
- review the success of parent payment arrangements based on the number of outstanding debts and the proportion of families who make a voluntary contribution;
- review whether the administration and communication of arrangements could be improved.

This policy will be reviewed in 2014.

This policy was ratified by School Council in December 2011