

PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Rationale

Aireys Inlet Primary School (AIPS) is committed to ensuring the school has the best educational opportunities and outcomes for students both inside and outside the classroom. We are also committed to ensuring that there is equity and access for all students and a robust and comprehensive learning program that supports student aspirations.

AIPS designs and develops the learning and teaching programs, drawing on the best educational knowledge and practices. The school strives to offer broad and enriched opportunities to students that are above and beyond what is required in the standard curriculum. The learning and teaching programs at AIPS reflect the priorities, decisions and needs of the school and this in turn, informs the fees set by school council.

AIPS is reliant upon the payment of school-level parent payments and contributions to enable the school to provide the essential educational items required to assist it to achieve the level of education expected of primary schools. AIPS School Council has resolved to develop a school-level payment policy to promote and encourage the payment of school-level parent payments fairly throughout the AIPS school community.

An annual budget is prepared by School Council to provide and manage resources to effectively run AIPS and its curriculum and programs. The revenue for the school is funded from the Department of Education and Training (DET) Student Resource Package (SRP) and School-Level Parent Payments and Contributions.

Department of Education and Training (DET) Student Resource Package (SRP) Funding: DET provides funding for our school through the SRP. This funding is to staff salaries, administration, utilities and services, maintenance, urgent works and cleaning.

School-Level Parent Payments and Contributions: The school relies on support from families through the payment of school-level payments and contributions and fundraising. These contributions are the major source for our educational and school program funding. This enables the school to provide the essential educational items and environment required to maintain the quality education we deliver.

School Council supplements DET funds by requesting payments from parents under three categories: Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items or Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Essential Student Learning Items

Items, activities or services that the school deems essential to student learning in the standard curriculum. Parents/guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child.

Examples are:

- Items that the student takes temporary or permanent possession of such as book pack and stationary items, book bags and computer applications;
- Materials for learning and teaching where the student uses school resources

- Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend, such as costs associated with camps, excursions and swimming entrance and transport costs.

Optional Items

Programs offered on a user-pays basis, which parents/guardians may choose whether their child accesses or participates.

Examples are:

- Extra-curricular music, sport programs or activities; and
- School Magazine, Year 6 Celebration, concert DVDs.

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents/guardians may be invited to donate to the school.

For Example:

- 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 or student-related services. These contributions are NOT tax deductible;
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school. These contributions or donations are NOT tax deductible; and
- Donations to a building fund or library fund (if these funds have been endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office and have a Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) status). Donations to these funds **ARE** tax deductible to the donor.

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.

Aims

To provide students of AIPS a high standard of education, access to quality facilities and specialised programs.

To allow School Council to establish a structure for School charges.

To ensure that parents are fully informed of payments requested by AIPS, how they are set and how the decisions are made.

To ensure compliance with the Education and Training reform Act 2006, DET policy and guideline documents.

Implementation

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and administration of the AIPS Parent Payment Policy developed and approved by School Council.

School Council will set Parent Payments as part of its budget each year.

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.

School Council will set a timeline for parent payments with all payments to be finalised by the commencement of the school year unless otherwise agreed to.

The School will comply with the DET 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.

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PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

In particular Aireys Inlet Primary School:

- Will notify all parents of the school-level parent payments and the date for payment not less than six weeks before the due date for payment;
- Those families experiencing difficulty with the payment of school-level parent payments are encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal to confidentially discuss alternative payment methods. A range of payment options will be freely available and flexible arrangements may be requested in special circumstances;
- Payment may be made by cash, cheque, EFT, BPay or a credit card approved by AIPS;
- If the Essential Student Learning Items payment has not been paid, AIPS may provide a statement of outstanding accounts for school-level parent payments no more than once a term.
- 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 Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions;
- CASES21 Finance package will be utilised 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 Contributions brochure, Parent Newsletters and Family Statements, which will be provided to all families 2 times per year.

In implementing this policy, the school will adhere to the following 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 judgment and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments; and
- **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.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

The Victorian Government introduced the 4-year program in 2015: Parents must apply through Aireys Inlet Primary School. Eligible families will receive \$125 per primary school student. Parents/students holding a means-tested concession card may be eligible. Foster parents and Veterans Affairs card holders may also be eligible. For further online information, please visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/csef and the school office to apply.

Uniform support

Uniform support may be available for eligible students from State Schools' Relief. Parents must contact Aireys Inlet Primary School to confirm eligibility. Applications must be submitted by the school. Parents cannot apply directly to State Schools' Relief. Please contact Aireys Inlet Primary School for further information on uniform support for families.

Centrepay

Centrepay is a free, voluntary service for Centrelink customers to pay expenses as regular deductions from their Centrelink payments. Deductions can be started, changed or cancelled at any time to suit the family's circumstances.

Welfare agencies

There may be help from Welfare and support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

In the context of commitment and responsibility, the school has to be responsive to parents experiencing either short-term or long-term hardship. AIPS will provide for an individualised, family-centred and student outcomes approach that necessarily requires thoughtful consideration of each situation. In addition, a proactive approach will be taken and employ early identification and engagement strategies to identify families, who may be experiencing hardship.

All parents are able to contact the Principal, with whom payment arrangements can be discussed. Examples of payment arrangements:

- Deferred payment or the extension of payment deadlines;
- Flexible payment plans – beyond what is available in the school's standard policy; and
- Cost saving options available at the school, such as second-hand uniform, loan of school resources, eg: iPads.

We encourage all parents in hardship to meet with the Principal to discuss their individual situation.

These meetings will be confidential.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The school community can access this policy on the school website and the arrangements for financial hardship through the following means:

- DET Parent Payment Policy published on the school website;
- Reference to key information distributed with the new year School Fees letter; and
- Opportunities available for parents to raise any issues or make general inquiries about charges can be made via the school office; in person, via email or phone and should be directed to the Business Manager.

Evaluation

School Council has responsibility to monitor the implementation of this policy. In doing so, it will focus on the following:

- Transparency of process;
- Communication and engagement with the school community; and
- Outcome of hardship cases.

This Parent Payment Policy will be reviewed as a part of the school's annual financial policy review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council - May **2021**.