



ASCOT VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT/GUARDIAN PAYMENT POLICY

Drafted May 2015. Passed by SC August 2015

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.

Ascot Vale Primary School (AVPS) spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. Requisites 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, however, this is not the preferred arrangement. 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 (eg. Senior school sports t-shirts, hats)
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions that 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. MVIMP (instrumental music), swimming program
- school-based performances, productions and events

- school magazines, newsletters, class photographs
- camps, excursions & sport

Excursion & Sport Levy (Optional educational items)

Throughout the year each unit participates in excursions and/or incursions related to work completed in the classrooms. AVPS will maintain a yearly excursion/incursion levy, amounts will vary at different year levels and the fee charged will be **non-refundable**. Parents will receive a note outlining details of the excursion and asking for permission for their child to attend. Payment will be taken from an annual or termly excursion levy per student. A separate sports levy will be charged each semester to children who participate in interschool sport. Any students leaving the school will have any remaining credit refunded.

- **Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school. Ascot Vale Primary School seeks voluntary contributions for:
 - Library trust fund* (i.e. additional books and resources)
 - Buildings & Grounds trust fund* (i.e. gardens and seating)
 - Student Sponsorship (i.e. sponsorship for students to enable participation in camps , sport and excursions)
 - Other (additional voluntary contribution)

*Voluntary contributions to the Library and Buildings and Grounds trust funds are tax deductible.

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 may be available to eligible families, eg Camps, Sports and Excursions fund (CSEF), Schoolkids Bonus, State Schools Relief Committee support, second hand uniform supplies and the AVPS Student Sponsorship program. If families experience difficulty making payments, payment plans (i.e. paying by instalments) can be arranged in consultation with the school.

Administrative and payment processes

- AVPS makes every effort to keep the cost and number of items that need to be purchased to a minimum. We aim to ensure that the costs of education are affordable for all parents and guardians whilst adequately allocating resources for learning.
- 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 item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.
- Payment methods available are: Cash/Cheque at the office or classroom cashbooks and Credit/Debit card at office.
- Receipts will be issued to parents upon making payments and receipted on CASES21.

- 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.
- Administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental (DET) requirements, such as CASES21 financial reporting.

References:

DET Parent payments

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx>

DET Parent Payments Categories Flowchart

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/management/parentpaycatflow.pdf>

Camp Sports & Excursion Fund

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx>

Schoolkids Bonus

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/schoolkids-bonus>

This policy was:

Approved – August 2015 - **This policy needs to be reviewed annually. August 2016.**