

Rationale:

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training (DET) Parent Payments Policy.

Boroondara Park Primary School (BPPS) Council has a responsibility to ensure the school has the best educational opportunities and outcomes for students both inside and outside the classroom, that there is equity and access for all students and a robust and comprehensive learning program that supports student aspirations.

BPPS 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 BPPS reflect the priorities, decisions and needs of the school and this, in turn, informs the fees set by school council.

BPPS has a responsibility to inform the community how parent payments are set and clearly communicate how decisions are made.

It recognises that some families experiencing hardship may need additional consideration and support. Programs will be funded by the DET through the Student Resource Package (SRP), parent payments and other locally raised funds.

Aims:

- to offer high quality learning opportunities for all students, with broad and enriched opportunities that are above and beyond what is required in the standard curriculum
- to ensure that parents are fully informed of payments requested by BPPS, how they are set and how the decisions are made.

Implementation:

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

1. Essential education 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 text books, student stationery, book bags and computer applications.
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (e.g. art projects, workbooks, photography)
- school uniform
- activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend, such as costs associated with camps, excursions and swimming.

2. Optional extras

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

Examples are:

- Extra-curricular music, chess, and sport programs or activities
- School Magazine, Graduation, concert DVDs

3. 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.
- 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.

A. 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 judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **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

B. In implementing this policy, the school will adhere to the following practices:

- all requests for payment, (new year fee letters, camp notices, swimming notices, etc) will be fair and reasonable and be accompanied by the following information:
 - the availability of alternative payment options for parents who are experiencing financial difficulties (eg: instalments) and an invitation to contact the principal if the parent wishes to discuss these.
 - the option for parents of purchasing equivalent Essential Student Learning items themselves, in consultation with the school. (not including activities set by the school).
 - details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school.
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed.
- notice of requests for payment of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions will be issued six weeks prior to the end of the previous school year.
- administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting.
- all students have access to the standard curriculum and the school will not 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.
- the Principal will ensure that all staff are familiar with and adhere to this policy.

Family Support options:

BPPS ensures families are aware of the range of support options available to them, if experiencing difficulty in paying for essential items and the process involved in accessing them.

These include:

- access to State Schools' Relief support via the Principal to assist with uniforms, shoes, textbooks, and stationery
- the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, available to eligible families, to cover the costs of excursions, camps and sporting activities

- welfare and support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families.
- Internal provision through the annual cash budget.

Consideration of Hardship:

In context of the commitment and responsibility the school has to be responsive to parents, experiencing either short term or long term hardship, BPPS will provide for an individualised, family-centered 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 Principal, Eric Regester, with whom payment arrangements can be discussed.

Examples of payment arrangements:

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

Communication with families:

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

- BPPS Parent Payment Policy and Frequently Asked Questions published on the school website
- DET Parent Payment Policy published on the school website
- Reference to key information distributed with the new year School Fees letter

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.

Ph: 9857 5157

E: boroondara.park.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Evaluation:

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

- Transparency of processes
- Communication and Engagement with the school community
- Outcome of hardship cases

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

References:

DET Parent Payment Policy

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

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Finance Manual for Victorian Government Schools, June 2016