



Parent Payment Policy

Purpose

School Councils can request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian Government Schools in three categories – essential student learning items, optional education items, and voluntary financial contributions.

East Bentleigh Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. The School Council determines the level of class requirements, and all children receive the required books and stationery.

Department of Education Guidelines

[The Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#) provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in government schools. School Councils are responsible for developing and approving school-level parent payment charges and can request payments from parents under three categories only:

- Essential Student Learning Items
- Optional Items
- Voluntary Financial Contributions

Essential Student Learning Items are those items, activities, or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of.

Optional Items are those items, activities, or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a **user-pays basis** so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them. *The Steiner Stream at East Bentleigh Primary School is considered an Optional Item Above the Standard Curriculum.*

Voluntary Financial Contributions are where parents are invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

Cost and support to parents

When School Councils consider the proposed requests for parent payments the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school.

School Principals must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed.
- payment requests are broadly itemised within the appropriate category.
- information on payment options is available, accessible, and easily understood to all parents so that they know what to expect and what supports they can access.
- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum



of four weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.

- parents are provided with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year - ensuring parents have a clear understanding of the full financial contribution being sought.
- the status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel.
- Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

Support for families

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. School Principals and School Councils exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents.

Consideration of hardship arrangements with respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long-term hardship or short-term crisis on a confidential, case-by-case basis.

Implementation of Payment Policy

East Bentleigh Primary School's parent payment practices are informed by and compliant with the Department's Parent Payment Policy. The Principal has the ultimate decision-making and discretionary power in relation to the application and implementation of this policy on a case-by-case basis.

The tables and subsequent information below outline how payments are invoiced.

All families, including those in the Steiner Stream (which is considered above the Standard Curriculum) are asked to contribute towards the East Bentleigh Primary School Curriculum Contributions Payments.



Guidelines for Parent Payment of Curriculum Contributions for the STANDARD CURRICULUM (Victorian Curriculum)

Prior Notice of Invoice

Parents must be provided with notice of annual payment requests a minimum of four weeks before the end of the previous school year.

Payment of Curriculum Contributions

It is the schools' preference that Curriculum Contributions payment is made upfront, however, payments can also be made in four (4) monthly instalments, per the below table:

Table 1: Standard Curriculum Contribution payment options		Due Date
Option 1: Upfront Payment		31 st January 2025
Option 2: 4 Installments (Agreed Payment Plan)	Instalment 1 - 25% of Total	31 st January 2025
	Instalment 2 - 25% of Total	28 th February 2025
	Instalment 3 - 25% of Total	31 st March 2025
	Instalment 4 - 25% of Total	30 th April 2025

Family Support Options

Discretion and Decision Making

The Principal has the ultimate decision-making and discretionary power in relation to the application and implementation of this policy on a case-by-case basis.

CSEF

Families may be eligible for the Camps, Sports, and Excursions Fund (CSEF). See the Business Manager for further details.

State Schools' Relief

Families may be able to access support from the State Schools' Relief, an autonomous, charitable organisation that assists students experiencing short-term crises and long-term chronic needs attending government schools in Victoria. Supports include school clothing, footwear, textbooks, and other essential items. Schools can apply to State Schools' Relief for this support. See the Business Manager for further details. Items like school uniforms can be purchased second-hand at our Thursday Market.

Non-payment

- Children will not be permitted to participate in Extra-Curricular activities if the applicable costs are not paid in full prior to the activity.
- Any family having difficulty in meeting this deadline should contact the Principal as soon as possible to arrange a schedule for the payment of all outstanding costs.
- No extension of time to pay will be granted in any case where the family has not discussed the matter with the Principal.

Hardship

To apply for Hardship consideration, an appointment will need to be made with the Principal. In consultation with the Business Manager, the Principal can arrange for a payment plan to be written.

Hardship cannot be considered for families enrolled in the Steiner Stream as it is considered above the Standard Curriculum.



Guidelines for Payment of the Levy for the STEINER STREAM (in addition to the Standard Curriculum)

In addition to the contribution towards the East Bentleigh Primary School Curriculum Contributions, students can be enrolled (per the Enrolment Policy) in the Steiner Stream (which is considered an Extra-curricular Items and Activity above the standard curriculum).

A Steiner Levy is payable for children enrolled in the Steiner Stream. The Steiner Levy is set and reviewed by the School Council each year.

For the purpose of this policy, a term is defined as a Victorian Public School term as notified by the Department of Education and Training website for the applicable year.

Payment of the Steiner Levy

Entry into and / or continued participation in the Steiner Stream is contingent on paying the Steiner Levy within the timeframes specified at the time of offer. Entry into the Steiner Stream cannot be granted if these payments are not made.

Students entering the Steiner Stream during the year will be charged on a pro-rata basis from the beginning of the term of entry, and **payment is required before commencing**.

Table 2: Steiner Levy payment terms

	Due Date
Upfront Payment (in addition to Standard Curriculum fees)	13 th December, 2024

Discretion and Decision Making

The Principal has the ultimate decision making and discretionary power in relation to the application and implementation of this policy on a case by case basis.

Non-Payment of the Steiner Levy

Students may not enter / remain in the Steiner Stream at the start of a new year if payments are not paid in full by the due date.

If, after a payment reminder has been issued by the school, the Steiner Levy remains unpaid, the student will no longer be part of the Steiner Stream at the start of the next year. As a result, the student will be offered a place in the Standard Curriculum (Mainstream). For students living outside of the school zone, this is subject to spaces being available in the applicable year level.

Permanent Withdrawal from the Steiner Stream

Notice for Permanent Withdrawal

One (1) full term's notice in writing to the School Principal is required advising of the permanent withdrawal of a student from the Steiner Stream. If a full term's notice has not been given, then a charge equivalent to one (1) term will be applicable. Where all aspects of this Payment Policy have been adhered to (including one (1) full term's notice), the Principal **may** authorise a refund of the Steiner Levy as follows:

Term of Withdrawal	Term/s Refund
Term 1	Term 2, 3 and 4
Term 2	Term 3 and 4
Term 3	Term 4
Term 4	No refund



Re-enrolment after Permanent Withdrawal

If a student is permanently withdrawn for any reason whatsoever, a place in the Steiner Stream will not be reserved for that student.

Re-enrolment in the Steiner Stream is not guaranteed in the case of permanent withdrawal. If, after having been permanently withdrawn the student returns and seeks re-enrolment in the Steiner Stream within the school year, all outstanding monies must be paid in full prior to commencement.

Evaluation

- This policy will be evaluated and reviewed annually by the Finance Subcommittee and School Council or as directed by DET policy and direction.
- Implementation will be monitored for all stakeholders.
- Essential Education costs will be approved by School Council.
- Audit reports will monitor practices and budgets.

Review Cycle

Policy last reviewed	July 2024
Approved by	School Council – 22 nd July 2024
Next scheduled review date	