

Rationale

The Hamilton North Primary School Council annually reviews parent payment requests to ensure they are in line with Department of Education & Training guidelines and recognises that some families experience financial hardship from time to time. The Parent Payment Policy outlines what the school can charge for, associated costs and the support available for families.

Aims

To provide opportunities for children of families experiencing financial hardship to participate in the full range of educational experiences as enjoyed by all students.

Implementation

- The Hamilton North Primary School Council, in line with Department of Education & Training guidelines, requests parents to provide funds for the following:
 - **Essential Education Items** – individual and class stationery supplies and curriculum materials, sourced in bulk by the school to minimise costs
 - **Optional Extras** – additional programs such as camps/sleepovers, excursions and swimming which are offered on a user pays basis
 - **Voluntary Financial Contributions** - the School Council invites parents/guardians to make a voluntary donation to upgrading our ICT resources and to assist with the provision of a safe and secure environment for children
- Parents will be provided with early notification of essential education items requests six weeks prior to the end of the previous school year, with reasonable notice given for optional item requests during the year
- The Parent Payment schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate), essential payment dates, options to make payments by instalments and clear definitions of the category of any payments (ie Essential, Optional or Voluntary)
- No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution. User pays activities should be paid prior to attendance
- Parents will be made aware of any government financial support schemes (eg CSEF - Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund)
- The school's nominated parent payment contact person will be the Business Manager, Lesley McDermaid. Any parent experiencing financial hardship should make contact by telephone, in person or by email (mcdermaid.lesley.c@edumail.vic.gov.au) to discuss entering into alternative and confidential payment arrangements
- Parents may be accompanied by a support person or community advocate if they choose to do so
- For parents willing to contribute, but limited in their ability to do so, the parent payment contact person has the authority to use their discretion to negotiate appropriate forms of payment assistance, enabling parents to nominate a payment and/or plan they can afford
- A pro-active approach is needed across the school to ensure that the parent payment contact person is aware of families needing assistance. Teachers or other staff members may be the first to see indicators of hardship
- The Student Welfare budget will contain limited funds to be used to assist families experiencing financial hardship
- School uniform is available on an order only basis, with order forms sent out with the newsletter twice a term. The school sources high quality, low cost uniform, without logos to make uniform affordable for all families. To support families, the school also operates a second-hand uniform shop, with parents donating uniform items that are no longer required. The State School's Relief program can also assist with uniform purchases.

Evaluation

School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually. In doing so, School Council will also consider its financial support programs and any Departmental advice or instruction.

This policy was ratified at School Council on 19th June 2018 and will be reviewed with the Parent Payment Policy in November 2019