PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

Rationale:
The Education & Training Reform Act 2006 empowers school councils 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.

Aims:
To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.

This policy has been developed to ensure that:

- costs to parents and guardians are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution
- access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withhold as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.

Hampton Park Primary School spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.

Parents and guardians also have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. 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.

Parent 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 or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

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, photography, catering)
- school uniform
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which 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. instrumental music, dance classes
- school-based performances, productions and events
• class photographs.

**Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents or guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust.

**Hampton Park Primary School Parent Payment Subsidy**

This school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. The Hampton Park Primary School Council has approved the provision of a subsidy to eligible parents/carers of $200 per child in 2015 to assist with the purchase of essential education items. Application forms for this subsidy will be included with the parent payment notice. Details for eligibility are included on the form.

**Payment arrangements**

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year).

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each items falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid for optional extras will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed annually. School Council will also review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually, and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education.

Ratified: June, 2015