Mansfield Primary School
Parent Payment Policy

BASIC BELIEF
Mansfield Primary School’s (MPS) “Parent Payment policy” has been developed in response to Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) expectations to ensure that the guidelines of DEECD Memo S300-2008 Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools are enacted.

IMPLEMENTATION
School councils can request payments from parents for student materials and services charges and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:
- essential education items
- optional extras
- voluntary financial contributions

A minimum of six weeks notice will be given for requests for payment of items in these categories. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
Access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment.
The account status of parents and guardians are confidential.

Correspondence
All communication with parents about education items, including requests for payment, will be fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES 21 invoices for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following information:
- the list of essential education items provided for students,
- the availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the principal if the parent wishes to discuss these
- details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school
- a copy of the school-level policy is available upon request.
- payment requests or letters to parents will clearly identify which category the items fall into, i.e. essential education items, optional education items or voluntary financial contributions.

Essential education items and optional extras
School council may request payments for two types of essential education items or optional extras used in the course of instruction, as detailed below. If parents and guardians choose to provide equivalent materials, this should be done in consultation with the school, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school. However, there are some items which, due to their nature, may only be provided by the school.

Essential education items
Essential education items are those items used in the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents and guardians are required to either provide or pay the school to provide. These items include:
- materials that the individual student takes possession of, including text books and stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where the student consumes or takes possession of the finalised articles (e.g. art resources, ceramics etc);
- school uniform
– essential services associated with, but not considered to be a part of, instruction in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (e.g. life education van materials, swimming program).

Optional extras
Optional extras (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:
– instructional support material, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program (e.g. student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use, and religious education materials)
– extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music tuition, ski program)
– school-based performances, productions and events
– materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials/services required for access to the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable (e.g. the use of more expensive materials)
– materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. school magazines)
– school facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the standard curriculum program, and not otherwise provided for through the SRP (e.g. student accident insurance, and hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).

Voluntary financial contributions
School councils may invite parents and guardians of a student enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:
– contributions to a building and grounds beautification trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund (these trust funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax deductible)
– 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
– general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Payment arrangements and non-payment
Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
Parents and guardians in receipt of the Victorian Government’s Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), where relevant, have the option of providing essential education items themselves or authorising the school to direct part of the school’s portion of the family’s EMA towards particular items. Families in receipt of the EMA may choose to sign over their portion of the EMA cheque to be used towards payment of essential education items and optional extras.

Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year must be returned to the parent/guardian unless there is agreement by the parent/guardian that this money can be carried over into the next year.
– students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions
– all students will have access to the standard curriculum program
– parents and guardians will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp
– invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents will be generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month
– only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents and guardians
– under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

This policy was ratified by the Mansfield Primary School Council on – 15/3/2010

Review Date: 2013