



Brighton Secondary College Council

College Charges and Voluntary Contributions Policy – 2016-2018

1.0 Background

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program (i.e. eight key learning areas) in State Government Schools. The Department provides funding to schools through the Student Resource Package (SRP) and various other programs. This includes funding for the standard curriculum program and associated education items, equipment and operational costs.

This free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities required to provide the standard curriculum program. The standard curriculum program includes core learning and teaching activities associated with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AusVELS) and senior secondary certificates (VCE, VCAL and VET programs).

The department also empowers school councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction and to raise other additional funds.

1.1 Definitions

Debts: for internal college financial audit requirement, unpaid charges constitute a debt.

1.2 Aim

This policy sets out the ways the college will manage the collection of locally raised funds that support the college's teaching and learning programs, extra-curricular and co-curricular programs.

The Departmental Policy that this policy conforms with can be viewed at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

2.0 Parent Payment categories

This table describes the three parent payment categories that college councils can request payments from parents.

Category	Description
Essential education items	<p>These are items which parents/guardians pay the college to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate. These items are essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• materials that the individual student takes possession of, such as netbooks, 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 (where applicable)• activities associated with, but not 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. transport and entrance costs). <p>Note: If parents/guardians choose to provide equivalent materials themselves, this should be done in consultation with the college, and items should meet the specifications provided by the college. However, there are some items (e.g. food provisions for home economics) which, due to their nature, can only be provided by the college.</p>
Optional extras	<p>These are items provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and are offered to all students. They are provided on a user-pays basis and if</p>



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	<p>parents/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.</p> <p>These items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• instructional support material, resources and administration in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. student computer printing for personal use)• extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (E.g. swimming programs)• college-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. college magazines)• college facilities and equipment not associated with providing 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	<p>Parents/guardians, or anyone else, can be invited to make a philanthropic donation to the college for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contributions to a building 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 college (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the SRP.

3.0 Implementation

- all students have access to the standard curriculum program
- the college will not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment for any of the three categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- cost is kept to a minimum
- payment requests must be clearly itemised within each category
- parents/guardians will be given the option of purchasing equivalent essential education items themselves, in consultation with the college
- students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, refused instruction or disadvantaged on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions. For example if parents/guardians choose for their children not to attend a **compulsory** excursion/camp an alternative option needs to be provided.
- the status and details of any payments or non-payments are confidential



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- parents will be provided with early notice of payment requests (e.g. a minimum of six weeks notice prior to the end of the previous college year)
- payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used

3.1 Important:

The college recognises and affirms that it is not acceptable to use coercion or harass parents/guardians to obtain payment.

The Principals will ensure any payment records are kept confidential. The public identification of students or their parents/guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is unacceptable and will not occur in any circumstance.

Under no circumstances will collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by the college to obtain any funds from parents/guardians

3.2 Camps

Parent payments for camps has been clarified using the categories below.

Three categories:

1. Compulsory camps directly related to provision of the core curriculum (AusVELS/VCE/VET). These are subject based camps. A parent may not be charged for them and if they choose not to send their child, alternative educational activities that achieve an equivalent education outcome is required to be provided by the college. Example, Biology camp.
2. Compulsory co-curricular camps related to **supporting** the course of instruction in the standard curriculum. Parents can be required to pay for this category of essential education items. If a parent does not pay for this category of camp, their child may be excluded from the camp and an alternative activity program that achieves equivalent outcomes is not required to be provided by the college. Example Year level camps.
3. Non-compulsory extra-curricular camps. These camps do not support the provision of the core curriculum. They are optional and there is no requirement for the college to provide an alternative activity for non-participants. Example, World Challenge Expedition.

3.3 Hardship

In cases where financial hardship prevents parents from being able to make pay College charges, the college undertakes to enact a range of actions to support these families. Actions may include:

1. Waiving charges
2. Part subsidy of charges
3. The establishment of a payment plan

It is the obligation of the parent(s) to establish hardship grounds with the college well **prior** (four weeks) to remittance dates for College charges. The college Registrar will establish and maintain parent payment plans. In respect to cases 1 and 2 above the college registrar will make representations on behalf of families suffering from hardship to the principal.

4.0 Evaluation

This policy was endorsed by the College Finance Committee on 6th October 2015

This policy was ratified by College Council on 14th October 2015