

**SORRENTO PRIMARY
PARENT PAYMENT POLICY**
Ratified: 27th February 2017
Due for Review: 27th February 2020



SCHOOL

PURPOSE

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all students have access to the standard curriculum.

RATIONALE

Parent contribution, in all forms, assists Sorrento PS to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student.

Sorrento Primary School Council requests payments from parents for student materials and services charges. These payments fall into the following categories:

1. **Essential Education Items** which parents/guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. stationery, text books, virtual text books, program licences and essential classroom resources where required).
2. **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents/guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. some visiting artists, excursions, extracurricular programs or activities).
3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** allow parents to make a donation to the school for a general specific purpose eg: school grounds projects. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

IMPLEMENTATION

Sorrento Primary School Council ensures that parent payments are kept to a minimum and do not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.

The school-level policy on Essential Education Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions ensure that:

- Parents and guardians are provided with early notice of requests for payment of Essential Education Items and Optional Extras ie camps. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- Items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed.
- Administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting.
- The school does not withhold access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level as a condition of payment of Essential Education Items, Optional Extras or Voluntary Financial Contributions.
- The status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents/guardians are confidential.

Essential Education Items and Optional Extras

- Sorrento Primary School Council may request two types of payments (Essential Education Items or Optional Extras) used in the course of instruction, as detailed below.
- Parents/guardians must be given 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, and items should meet the specifications provided by the school.

However, there are some items (Prep Take Home Book bag with school logo etc) which, due to their nature, can 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/guardians are responsible for and may choose to provide or pay the school to provide.

These items may include:

- Materials that the individual 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, ceramics, photography, catering).
- 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. transport and entrance costs).

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/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, licences for in school and at home use).
- Extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music) 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.
- School facilities and equipment not associated with the provision of the standard curriculum program, (e.g. hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments).

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Sorrento Primary School Council invites parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school, or anyone else, to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. Sorrento Primary School Council may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:

- 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 school (e.g. equipment, materials or services) in addition to those funded through the Student Resource Package. This may include additional computers or student-related services.
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Payment Arrangements and Non-Payment

The Sorrento Primary School Council Policy ensures that:

- Students are not 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 have access to the standard curriculum program.

- Parents/guardians are provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp. Payment plans can be commenced for all camps at least two months prior to the event to allow families to manage their finances accordingly to meet this expense.
- Invoices for unpaid Essential Education Items or Optional Items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.
- Parents will be provided with an option to pay in instalments.
- Administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting.
- Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon payment for events.
- Only the initial invitation for Voluntary Financial Contributions and one reminder notice, per year, is sent to all parents/guardians. However family statements will be sent home once a term to remind families of any overlooked expenses.
- Under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents/guardians.
- Sorrento Primary School Council will ensure any record of payments or contributions by parents/guardians is 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 must not occur in any circumstance.

Notices regarding Parent Payment Charges will include the following information:

- The option to purchase Essential Education Items through the school or through a local supplier.
- A clear description of each of the parent payment categories.
- A Booklist which identifies the items parents are being asked to contribute to at each level. Payment requests or letters to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an Essential Education Items, Optional Education Item or Voluntary Financial Contributions.
- Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.
- Family statements will be sent home once a term to those families with balances still outstanding. In some circumstances families may be contacted by phone to discuss possible payment options ie. payment plans

Sorrento Primary School Council strongly emphasises that it is not acceptable to use, debt collectors, coercion or to harass parents/guardians to obtain payment.

Support for Families

- Consideration in respect of payment requests will be provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis.
- Support for families experiencing hardship can include:
 - Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF)
 - State Schools Relief
 - Local Organisations (Lions Club, Rotary)
 - Second hand and low cost options eg: Second hand clothing
- Families experiencing hardship can discuss with the Business Manager, Principal or Assistant Principal alternative arrangements.

Communication

- The Parent Payment Policy will be on the school website and sent out via Compass each year.
- Queries regarding Parent Payments can be made at any time with either the Business Manager or Principal.

Evaluation

- School Council is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the School's three year cycle or before as appropriate.