



Parent Payment Policy

PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

Essential Education Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions

The Bacchus Marsh Primary School Council may request payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions used in the course of instruction, as detailed below.

Parents and guardians will 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 (e.g. specialized diaries) which, due to their nature, may only be provided by the school as part of the book packs. Book packs will not be split to provide only those items not otherwise available.

Where the Principal or the Bacchus Marsh Primary School Council is uncertain as to whether parents and guardians can reasonably be expected to pay for an education item or service, advice will be sought from the D.E.T. South Western Victoria Regional Office.

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 responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide. These items 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 finalised articles (e.g. visual and performing arts materials) and
- 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 encouraged 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 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 and internet access for recreational or non-school use)
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. instrumental music tuition)
- 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) and

- 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).

At Bacchus Marsh Primary School we offer facilities and extra curriculum activities beyond the standard curriculum.

Our Kitchen, Garden, Farm and Environmental Science programs are all unique to Bacchus Marsh Primary School and are funded through the contributions by families in this category. These programs receive no Government funding and without the continued financial support of families via the payment of this contribution these programs will cease to operate.

Bacchus Marsh Primary School currently provides students with access to Interactive Whiteboards and Televisions, Desktop Computers, Notebook Computers and iPads and we are always examining new technologies and ways to enhance student learning through the use of these technologies. Government funding provides access to the basic technologies and without additional assistance funded via this contribution our School Council will not be able to continue to provide these emerging technologies.

Parents choose to send their children to Bacchus Marsh Primary School to benefit from these and other activities that are not funded as part of the standard curriculum. Without your financial support, these activities cannot continue.

Voluntary Financial Contributions

The Bacchus Marsh Primary School Council 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. The School Council may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following purposes:

- contributions to a building and grounds beautification fund or contributions to a library 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 and
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

This school-level 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 and guardians are 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 are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month,
- administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting,
- receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon request,
- only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents and guardians and
- under no circumstances will collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents and guardians.

Payments will be accepted by any of the following means:

- Qkr (our preferred method)
- Direct Credit
- Bpay
- EFTPos
- Cash or
- Cheque.

Essential educational items must be paid for in full before delivery, use or attendance by the student can take place.

Optional Extras can be paid via the following:

in full before the first day of the first school term,

Half before the first day of the first school term and half by the last day of the first school term,

One third before the first day of the first school term and balance by the last day of the second school term or

Other payment arrangements. If selecting this option, please make an appointment with the school to discuss your circumstances and the available options.

The Principal will ensure any record of payments or contributions by parents and guardians is kept confidential. The School Council recognises the public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is unacceptable and must not occur in any circumstances.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

At Bacchus Marsh Primary School, parents who have difficulty paying for essential items can access a range of support options including:

- For those on Healthcare or Pension Cards, Centrepay enables a set amount to be deducted from weekly / fortnightly Centrelink payments and sent to the school to assist parents and guardians of students in meeting the costs of sending their child to school. Centrepay provides financial assistance to families for expenditure on school and sporting uniforms, school bags, books and related expenses. For more information, parents and guardians should see <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/centrepay>.
- Healthcare or Pension Card holders are also able to apply for the State Governments 'Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) for financial assistance with these school activities,
- Access to State Schools Relief Committee support via the Principal to assist with clothing/uniforms and
- Welfare and support agencies that have established partnership arrangements with schools to provide further assistance to students and their families. The school should be contacted for more information.

The Principal will exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of individual students and their families. The Principal is encouraged to make decisions about how to manage non-payment of essential education items or optional extras on a case-by-case basis.

Where families have difficulty making payments, the Principal is expected to discuss the range of support options available, and to negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement, such as payment by instalments.

Parents and guardians who experience difficulties providing or paying the school to provide essential education items, will be encouraged to make an appointment with the Principal or other nominated senior staff member to discuss alternative payment methods.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

Bacchus Marsh Primary School will provide support to families experiencing any hardship. In the first instance, parents should contact the school's Business Manager on 5367-2745 or via email at bacchus.marsh.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Parents can also call the school to discuss their individual situation in person.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

This school-level policy will ensure that all communication with parents about education items, including requests for payment, is fair and reasonable. Payment requests, letters or CASES 21 invoices for student materials and services charges will be accompanied by the following information:

- the need for parent/guardians to provide essential education items for their students, and the fact they have the option of purchasing these through the school or through a local supplier, where appropriate
- a clear description of each of the three parent payment categories
- the availability of alternative payment options and an invitation to contact the Principal if the parent wishes to discuss these
- that payment is accepted by either cash, cheque, credit card, debit card, Bpay or via Qkr
- details of how payments or contributions will be spent by the school and
- a copy of the school-level policy.

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

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

The School Council will issue only one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.

The School Council notes that it is not acceptable to use coercion or to harass parents and guardians to obtain payment.

A copy of this policy will be sent to families via Tiqbiz prior to the initial request for payment and will also be available on the Bacchus Marsh Primary School website.

Further information can be obtained by calling the school on 5367-2745, emailing the school at bacchus.marsh.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au or sending a note with return contact details on Tiqbiz.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

It is the responsibility of the Bacchus Marsh Primary School Council to monitor the implementation of this policy, identify the factors / measures to be taken into account such as the transparency of the process and engagement with parents and take appropriate steps to ensure it falls in line with the Department of Education and Training's guidelines.

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis and any updates / changes will be reported to the School Council for consideration and inclusion / exclusion.

The next review of the policy will be in November 2017.

Date of approval by School Council

6 December 2016