



# PARENTS PAYMENTS POLICY

## PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

Ararat Secondary College School Council will annually review parent payments requested to ensure they are in line with Department of Education & Training guidelines. Charges will be clearly itemized, costed and categorized as Essential Education Items, Optional Extras or Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Parent contribution requests will be made in line with the principles of educational value; access, equity and inclusion; affordability; engagement and support; respect and confidentiality; transparency and accountability. Parent contributions will be requested to assist the college in providing an enhanced teaching and learning program for every student in line with the College strategic plan.

School Council supplements Department of Education funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items:-

1. **Essential Education Items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide eg: stationary booklists, text books and uniforms, etc
2. **Optional Extras** which are offered on a user pays basis and parents can choose whether or not their child participates eg: school magazine, camps and excursions, instrumental music tuition or instrument hire etc.

In addition, School Council invites parents to make donations by means of:-

3. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** which are non-compulsory donations for specific projects eg: library resources, grounds projects, chaplaincy support, or technologies equipment.

## PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

Parents will be provided with early notification of annual payment requests in December of the previous school year. Reasonable notice will be given for any other payment requests during the year (i.e. excursions).

Payment of school fees can be made via cash, cheque or EFTPOS at the College Office or alternatively via one of our payment plans. These choices include:-

- Bpay facilities. Details are included on your statement.
- CENTREPAY – If you receive any Centrelink payment an instalment may be deducted and remitted to the School on your behalf.
- Direct credit to our bank account – processed by you.
- Payroll deduction through your employer.

Please attend student fee day in the first week of the school year or contact the college office on 03 5352 4177 to make payment arrangements.

## FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

There are a number of support options available for parents including but not limited to;

- Second hand uniform (if available) via the school chaplain Philip Stevens
- Day user laptop program
- Camps, Sports & Excursion Funding (CSEF) available to eligible parents

- State Schools Relief (SSR) support available for uniforms/footwear/calculators/textbooks (via school chaplain Philip Stevens and SSR coordinators Angela Roberts and Ellie McDougall)
- Local community supports (school chaplain Philip Stevens can provide further information)

Information regarding support options is available from the general office and will be advertised periodically in the College Newsletter and on the website.

### CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

The College understands that families may experience financial difficulties or hardship at times and may be unable to meet full or part payments requested. Families are invited to contact the Business Manager, Sandra Jelowyi, to make payment arrangements or alternatively can contact the Principal Geoff Sawyer for a confidential discussion and information regarding support options.

As with all parent payments to the school, Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal

### COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The Parent Payment Policy and Implementation will be published on the College website. The explanation of charges booklets will also be distributed to families each year along with student end of year reports.

- General enquiries regarding parent charges may be made to the College office on 5352 4177. Concerns should be directed in the first instance to the Business Manager
- The payments schedule will include itemised details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate), essential payment dates, options to make payments by instalments, clear definitions of the category of any payments (ie: Essential, Optional or Voluntary), and advice to parents to contact the principal if they require support or additional information.
- All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where payments have or have not been received will not occur.
- All costs and processes associated with parent payments and voluntary contributions will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to Department of Education requirements, and will be within the expectations of the school community.
- Statements for unpaid **Essential Items** and **Optional Extras** will be sent out at least quarterly, with requests for **Voluntary Financial Contributions** to occur once each year.
- Unpaid **Essential Items** payments will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family. Unpaid **Optional Extras** payments may compromise a student's ability to be involved in the optional activity in the future. Unpaid **Voluntary Financial Contributions** do not constitute a non-payment and will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family.
- No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents or students.

### MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The College Council (via the Finance Committee) will conduct an annual review of the implementation of the Parent Payment Policy including addressing any concerns raised by the College community and any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education. Any changes to the Policy Implementation will be reported back to the community via notice on the College website.

Ararat College is committed to child safety (Ministerial Order No. 870) and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the safety of our students is paramount.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in October 2017  
This policy is due for review in....

February 2019