



BENTON JUNIOR COLLEGE PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Rationale:

School councils are able to request payments or contributions for education items and services from parents and guardians for students in Victorian government schools in the three categories – essential education items, optional education items and voluntary financial contributions.

Benton Junior College School Council has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. Class materials and stationery of a high quality are provided at a competitive price due to our ability to bulk order.

Parents and guardians also have 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, as items should meet the specifications provided by the school. There may also be certain items that due to their nature may only be provided by the school.

No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

Parent Payment Categories

Essential education items are those items or services that are essential to support 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 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);

Optional education items (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:

- camps, excursions, extra-curricular programs and inter-school sport;
- school-based performances, college productions and events;
- student ipad program, computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use;
- instrumental music program, including instrument hire.

These Optional Programs will be invoiced each term, with details of each item.

Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust.

Aims:

To provide high quality learning opportunities and facilities that cater for the needs of all children.

Implementation:

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist parents, including the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) and State Schools Relief Committee support.

*References: DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools Handbook
The Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

Payment arrangements

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (a minimum of six weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year). Payment request letters will be kept fair and reasonable.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

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

Families who do not have immediate capacity to pay are also able to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the school and are encouraged to make an appointment with the principal to discuss circumstances and available options.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional educational items will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians.

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for extra- curricular activities (camps, excursions, incursions, instrument hire etc.). A minimum of two week's notice will be given prior to the payment due date. Payment in full must be made by the due date. Students will not be permitted to participate in an extra-curricular activity if payment in full is not made prior to the event. Payment request letters will be kept fair and reasonable.

Extra-curricular activities must be paid by the due date. Late payments are not accepted. Parents experiencing financial hardship must make arrangements with the Principal or Business Manager prior to the due date.

Reminders for optional items are made via email one week before the due date, and via SMS one day before the due date.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school review cycle. School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments annually in line with DET policy.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on....	18th February 2020	
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