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PEMBROKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Financial Help for Families Policy

2023



Help for non-English speakers If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 9725 6689.

Hi theihternak zultphung kong hi na fian lomi a um ahcun Pembroke Primary Sianginn (9725 6689) chonh khawh a si.

POLICY

This policy sets out requirements for schools to prepare for and support families experiencing financial hardship in order to facilitate student participation in the full school program.

SUMMARY

- Schools must develop arrangements that support families experiencing financial hardship.
- Schools must communicate arrangements so that all families are well informed.
- Schools should put in place strategies to identify families experiencing hardship, while promoting their dignity, exercising sensitivity and confidentiality of their circumstances.

DETAILS

Schools must prepare for and support families who are experiencing financial hardship in order to facilitate student participation in the full school program.

This includes developing financial help for families arrangements that:

- support families on a case-by-case basis and provide an appropriate, achievable and family-centred response that promotes the dignity and confidentiality of family circumstances and assures families that students will continue to be supported to access the Curriculum
- nominate a suitable parent payments contact person who will be responsible for working with families to determine, negotiate and maintain appropriate responses.

FREE INSTRUCTION

All students in Victorian government schools must have free access to instruction that is offered by a school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements for the Victorian Curriculum F–10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), and the Victorian Pathways Certificate.

Schools can request that parents pay for items and activities beyond what the school provides for free in order to deliver the Curriculum.

Parents may experience difficulties:

- paying for extra-curricular items and activities that are suitable for their child
- purchasing educational items for their child to own, rather than use what is provided for free by the school.

FINANCIAL HELP ARRANGEMENTS

If a family is experiencing financial hardship and cannot afford to participate in the full school program, schools should consider school-based support such as:

- reminding families that curriculum contributions and other contributions are voluntary
- establishing flexible payment plans for extra curricular items and activities, or waiving, reducing or extending payment
- exercising discretion prior to generating reminder notices for unpaid items for families experiencing hardship
- referring families to government or community support programs that may help them to purchase uniforms and other educational items to own
- establishing strategies for the exchange of second-hand items to own such as textbooks, uniforms and stationery
- maintaining supportive contact with families and revisiting agreed arrangements when requested.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Schools should be aware of support programs provided by the Department and external providers, referring families to these services where appropriate or applying to programs on their behalf.

Schools can develop partnerships with local services and welfare groups which can provide specialist support and assistance to students and families in financial crisis.

Government funded support programs include:

- State Schools' Relief's Affordable School Uniform Program
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund
- student scholarships
- Marrung Education Scholarships.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Financial help arrangements must be:

- readily available through platforms such as on the school website, in enrolment packs, newsletters, within excursion permission forms and published parent payment arrangements
- communicated in language that is inclusive and non-judgmental
- communicated in language that is easy to understand, is culturally appropriate and if required, translated into multiple languages – schools can use funded Interpreting and Translating Services for key school communications
- consistent with the Parent Payments Policy.

Schools must include financial help for families arrangements whenever requesting payments for items and activities over and above what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. However, schools should not include financial help arrangements when only requesting voluntary contributions, to avoid the implication that payment is expected.

RELATED POLICIES

- Camps, Sport and Excursions Fund
- Interpreting and Translation Services
- Marrung education scholarships
- Parent Payments
- Personal Devices — Parent Payments and Access
- State Schools' Relief

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	1/06/2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	1/06/2026