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.

Eastwood Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. The book packs contain high quality materials 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);
- school uniform;
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

**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:

- student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use;
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes;
- school-based performances, productions and events; and
- school magazines, newsletters, class photographs.

**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.

**Second hand uniform shop**

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children’s education the school operates a second-hand school uniform shop.

**Other support options**

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 Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF) and State Schools Relief Committee support.
Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)
A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who holds an eligible Centrelink benefit and a Health Care Card or pension card, or Foster parent may be entitled to the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF). CSEF is provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities. The annual CSEF amount for 2015 is $125.00 for primary students and $250.00 for secondary students. Any portion of the CSEF not expended by the end of the year will be carried over into the next year.

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).

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, three payment options have been developed:

Option A  Full amount
Option B  Payment Plan – Commencing November previous year
Option C  Other – payment arrangements as negotiated

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 item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional 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.

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

Refunds for non attendance of camps, excursions and in school activities
Requests for refunds must be in writing and forwarded to the office as soon as possible following the activity and must state reason for the child’s non attendance. If approved, a credit note will be issued to be offset against future charges. Refunds will only be issued if there is no opportunity for future charges. Any refund request outside the school year of the activity will not be considered. Every request will be at the discretion of the Principal.

EVALUATION
Approved by School Council: September, 2015  Next review due: September 2015
This policy can also be reviewed as required.