

2019 Parent Payment Policy

1 **PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 Schools work in partnership with parents and the wider school community to provide the best educational opportunities and outcomes for students both inside and outside of the classroom. The commitment from parents to contribute in a range of ways benefits students and results in improved outcomes, wellbeing and engagement in learning. Parent contribution is highly valued at Nossal High School.
- 1.2 Drawing on the best education knowledge and practices, Nossal High School creates and develops a learning and teaching program that is above and beyond what is required in the standard school curriculum. Cross-subsidisation is already a feature of schooling at Nossal and for equity and enrichment purposes continues to be a feature of the school's budgeting process. This robust and comprehensive approach supports the aspirations of high achieving students and their parents and informs the parents of financial contributions set by the School Council each year.

2 **SCOPE**

- 2.1 Nossal High School Council annually reviews and establishes a rate of parent financial contributions relevant to each year level. In order to enable the school to continue to offer the enhanced programs and opportunities that are expected of this select entry school, these parent funded contributions are categorized as Essential, Optional and Voluntary and are anticipated to be paid for each student enrolled at the school.

3 **POLICY**

- 3.1 Nossal High School Council is committed to enabling students attending the school the best opportunity to participate in essential programs and activities and additional learning experiences over and above the standard curriculum.

Parent payment requests are made annually and are set out in Schedule A, attached to this policy. Schedule A describes items, activities, services and related costs within the three categories itemized below:

4 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 **Student Learning Materials & Activities - Essential Student Learning Items**

Items, activities or services that are deemed essential to support the Nossal High School curriculum. These items or activities are considered essential to deliver a high level, learning environment and enhanced outcomes for all students. (In some instances, students may take possession of, or consume relevant items in this category) Parents are expected to support the provision of Essential learning items for their children through payment of the requested contributions. In some instances, the independent purchase of items, where appropriate, may be an option however independently purchased items must be the same as the school provided items to ensure maximum class participation and equality of program opportunities. Perishable consumables are not permitted to be purchased independently (E.g. – food for Food Technology Classes)

4.2 Learning Enrichment - Optional Items

Items, activities or services that are offered to support, enrich and expand the Nossal High School curriculum.

These items or activities are provided on an opt-in basis. If parents choose to access these items for their student, payment will be required. (E.g. Individual music tuition, non-essential camps, subject based excursions and/or incursions, social events)

4.3 Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents are invited to make a voluntary donation towards the Building Fund (school facilities and grounds projects), Library fund (library resourcing and development), Music and / or Sports development programs. Voluntary Financial Contributions to the Building and / or Library fund are tax-deductible.

4.4 Payment Arrangements and Methods

- A Statement of account indicating the allocation of funds and current financial balance will be emailed to parents at the commencement of each term of the current school year.
- A Statement of account indicating the Annual Year level financial contribution for the forthcoming school year will be emailed to families in Term 4 of the current school year.
- Annual Year level contributions for the forthcoming school year will be listed on Compass Pay in Term 4 of the current year.
- Parents are required to log on to their Compass account to make payments as required.
- CompassPay will accept online payments in full or instalments via direct debit from a nominated credit card.
- Confidential Payment Plan arrangements, to suit individual circumstances or to address short term financial hardship can be discussed with the Accounts Receivable Officer, Mrs. Deepti Arora on 8762 4649 or finance@nossalhs.vic.edu.au
- Payments will be accepted over the counter in cash or eft, over the phone by eft, BPay, or by direct credit arrangements as alternatives to CompassPay.
- Unpaid parent payment contributions will be followed up by the Accounts Receivable Officer to ascertain circumstances and any potential need for support.

4.5 Family Support Options

- The Nossal High School Parents & Friends Association operate a second hand uniform shop on the first Monday of each month of term and an Annual Book and Uniform Sale on a Saturday in early December. Details are available at www.nossalhs.vic.edu.au
- Second hand uniform, texts and school equipment can also be accessed from “The Sustainable School Shop”. Details available at: www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au
- CSEF – Camps, Sports & Excursion Fund. Details regarding eligibility and application processes available at www.education.vic.gov.au/csef
- State Schools Relief – Details available at www.ssr.net.au/schools
- Community Assistance programs – Refer to Attachment B of this policy

4.6 Consideration of Hardship

- Parents experiencing short term financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Accounts Receivable Officer, Mrs. Deepti Arora on 8762 4649 or at finance@nossalhs.vic.edu.au to discuss support arrangements that may be available to assist with school expenses.
- Parents can communicate by phone, email or in person about their confidential financial situation.

- An assessment of short term hardship generally means Parent Funded contributions are given extensions of time for payment and an assessment of optional items selected is reviewed.
- Parents experiencing long term financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Business Manager, Ms. Gayl Shute on 8762 4655 or at finance@nossalhs.vic.edu.au to discuss support arrangements that may be available through the School Hardship Policy.
- Long Term hardship application through the Hardship policy requires an application in writing to the School Principal, through the Business Manager.

4.7 Communication with Families

- Nossal High School Parent Payment Policies (annually revised) are listed on the school website
- A link to the website for policy information will be provided to parents via the School newsletter
- As part of the Parent Funded Contributions information as detailed on CompassPay, a link to the website for policy information will be provided.
- Policies to be available on the Website in Term 4 of the preceding school year are:
 - NHS Parent Payment Policy
 - NHS Long Term Financial Hardship Policy
 - NHS Refunds – Camps & Excursions Policy.

4.8 Contact Details

General enquiries and payment information should be addressed to finance@nossalhs.vic.edu.au

Feedback to the School Council in regards to the Parent Payments policy and annual charges should be addressed to SchoolCouncil@nossalhs.vic.edu.au

Complaints should be addressed to The Principal at roger.page@nossalhs.vic.edu.au

5 EVALUATION

Nossal High School Council will annually monitor and update as required the implementation of the Parent Payment Policy. Parent feedback and impact on essential programs, activities and additional learning experiences will be reviewed.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

7 THIS POLICY IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING PLATFORMS:

- 8.1 School website, MS Teams (School Documents) Nossal High School Council Policy Records,

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Date Implemented	23rd October 2018
Author	Business Manager
Approved By	Nossal High School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	
Responsible for Review	Business Manager
Review Date	23rd October 2019

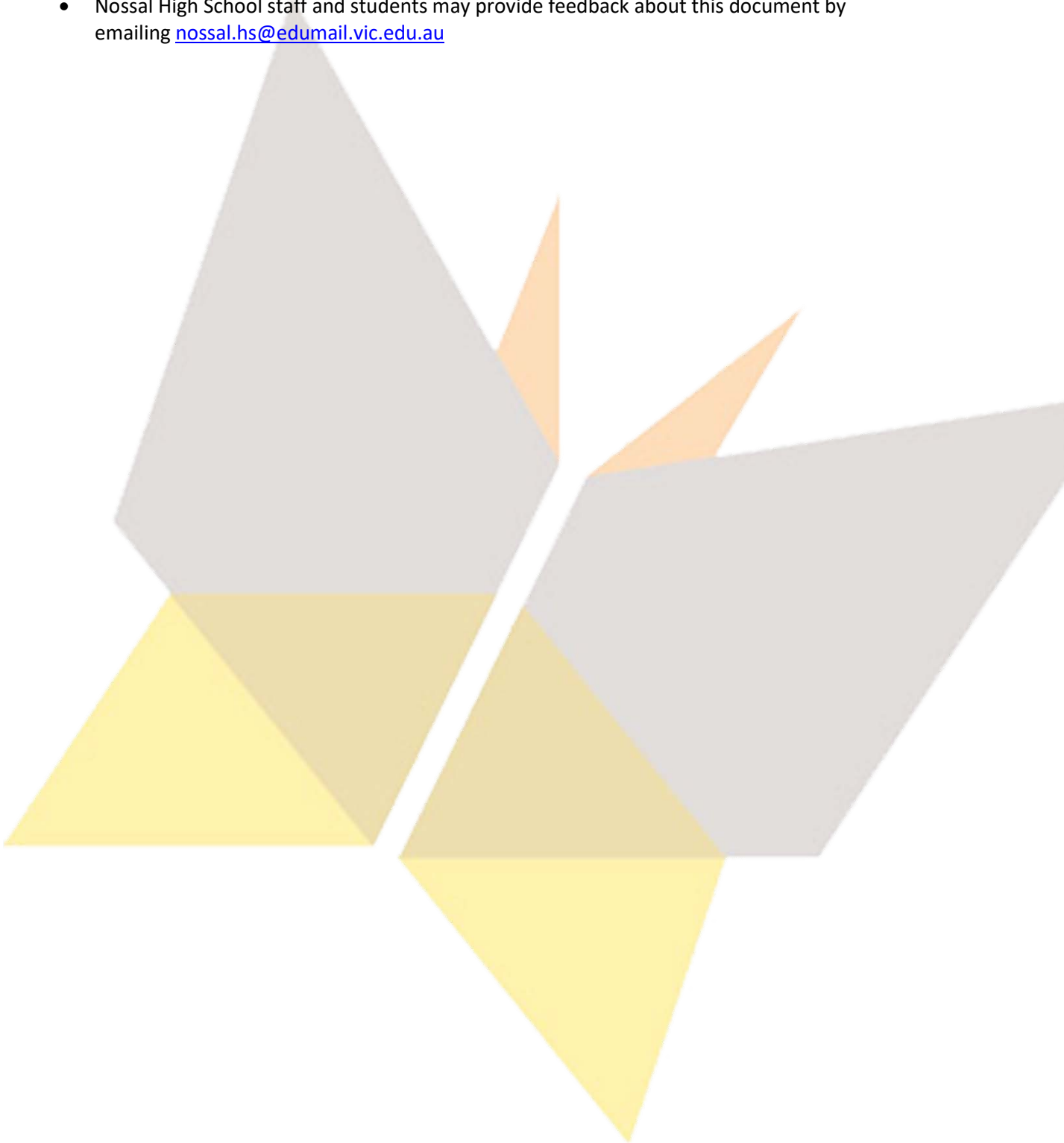
9 APPENDICES

DET Parent Payment Policy

DET Understanding Parent Payment Categories

10 FEEDBACK

- Nossal High School staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing nossal.hs@edumail.vic.edu.au



PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

PURPOSE

To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

RATIONALE

The Victorian community shares a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Schools are best placed to make local decisions which ensure that all students can access a broad range of learning opportunities that support their expectations and promote their aspirations as they move through the education system. Parent contribution, in all forms, assists schools to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by school communities.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources. This, in turn, informs the parent payment charges approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS CHARGE FOR?

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in government schools. School councils are responsible for developing and approving school-level parent payment charges and can request payments from parents under three categories only- Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Essential Student Learning Items are those items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of. Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.

Optional Items are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them.

Voluntary Financial Contributions

Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

The attached diagram "**Understanding Parent Payment Categories**" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

PRINCIPLES

- **Educational value:** Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent payments practices
- **Access, equity and inclusion:** All students have access to the standard curriculum program and participation of all students to the full school program is facilitated
- **Affordability:** Cost to parents is kept to a minimum and is affordable for most families at the school
- **Engagement and Support:** Early identification and engagement strategies by the school ensure parents are well informed of the payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship
- **Respect and Confidentiality:** Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **Transparency and Accountability:** School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils

COST AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS

When school councils consider the proposed requests for parent payments the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school.

School principals must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- payment requests are broadly itemised within the appropriate category
- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent Essential Student Learning Items themselves, in consultation with the school
- information on payment options is available, accessible and easily understood to all parents so that they know what to expect and what supports they can access
- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.
- parents are provided with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year- ensuring parents have a clear understanding of the full financial contribution being sought
- the status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel
- parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next
- use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted
 - there will be only one reminder notice to parents for voluntary financial contributions per year Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. Principals and school councils exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents. These can be accessed through [“Cost support for families.”](#)

Consideration to hardship arrangements in respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis. All schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty.

All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.

ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

In respect to each school’s development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

REVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Schools will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department’s [School Policy and Advisory Guide.](#)

Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see: [Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents](#)

Understanding Parent Payment Categories

Schools

What does the legislation say?

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?



Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

What principles govern parent payment practice?

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability
Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

Parents

What may parents be asked to pay for?

Schools can request payment for Essential Student Learning Items



These are items, activities or services that the school deems essential to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of

- e.g.
 - textbooks, activity books, exercise books
 - stationery, book bags
 - student ID cards, locks
 - cooking ingredients students will consume
 - materials for final products that students take home (technology projects, build-your-own kits, dioramas)
 - Picture Exchange Communication Systems

Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend

i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation

- e.g.
 - excursions
 - incursions
 - school sports
 - work placements



Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

Schools can request payment for Optional Items

These are items, activities or services that are optional and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

Items the student purchases or hires

- e.g.
 - school magazines, class photos
 - functions, formals, graduation dinners
 - materials for extra curricular programs
 - student accident insurance

Activities the student purchases

- e.g.
 - fees for extra curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition
 - fees for guest speakers
 - camps, excursions, incursions, sports
 - entry fees for school run performances

Items and/or materials that are more expensive than required to meet the standard curriculum

- e.g.
 - use of silver in metal work instead of copper
 - supplementary exam revision guides

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: www.education.vic.gov.au

Schools can invite
**Voluntary
Financial
Contributions**
for



- e.g.
 - Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
 - Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
 - General voluntary contributions