

Parent Payment Policy 2019

PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

The financial support of families is one of the key factors underlying the success and quality of Northcote High School's wide-ranging academic and co-curricular programs. Your financial support ensures we have the resources (materials and facilities) to successfully run programs to meet the diverse needs of our 1800 students.

Essential Student Learning Items (ESLI)	Optional Items	Voluntary Items
<p>Essential materials, equipment and services for all areas of curriculum.</p> <p>These items include (but are not limited to) such things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks • Stationary items • Student identification cards • Locks • Student planner • Consumables used in classes where students take the products/materials home • Essential excursions and incursions • Guest speakers • Resources provided to set up new students eg. Locks, book bags • 24/7 online access to curriculum and learning materials, and assessment, feedback and reporting via Compass and myNorthcoteHigh 	<p>Discretionary spending depending on experiences and involvement in optional activities that enrich students' lives at school.</p> <p>These items include (but are not limited to) such things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental music tuition • Student accident insurance • Hire/lease of equipment such as musical instruments) • School photos • School magazines • Formals • Camps • International tours • Materials that students may choose to use of a higher quality than those provided by the standard curriculum 	<p>Donations to our school's Thrive Fund to develop the buildings, facilities and opportunities for all students.</p> <p><i>Suggested amounts are included.</i></p> <p>BUILD: Improve learning and social spaces for our students (<i>Tax deductible</i>) \$150</p> <p>INSPIRE: Acquire library resources and fund student clubs / activities (<i>Tax deductible</i>) \$150</p> <p>EMPOWER: To support the purchase of essential items such as uniforms, books and travel cards for students in need (<i>Tax deductible</i>). \$150</p> <p>INNOVATE: Donate to support innovative ideas and projects for/by students and staff, via a grant process. (<i>Not tax deductible</i>). \$50</p>

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS

We have tailored three payment options so that you can choose the option that best suits your family, as outlined in the **Payment Request Form**:

A: Full Payment – Credit card, Cash, Cheque or BPAY

B: 10 Instalments – either by Compass Payment Portal or by Credit Card

C: Other Payment Plan or Arrangement – by negotiation with the school's Business Manager

Receipts will be issued to parents/guardians immediately upon making payment.

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

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS

Families in need of support to meet the educational expense of their child(ren) have a range of options available to them including:

- **Applying for the Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF)** – this fund contributes \$225 per year which can be allocated by the school towards camps, sports and/or excursions expenses.
- **Year 7 government school students who are CSEF recipients** are also eligible for a uniform voucher. Secondary schools are required to make applications on behalf of parents so please register your interest at the school. [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#)
- **Trading in second hand items** through the school uniform or book supplier. **Please note** in 2019, only students in Years 8-12 will have the option of purchasing second-hand uniform, as we are transitioning to a new uniform, and all Year 7s will be expected to wear the new school uniform.
- Online platforms, such as:
 - [State Schools' Relief clk2sell app](#)
 - www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au
 - trading websites (e.g. gumtree) or social media networks (e.g. private Facebook groups)
- **Northcote High School – Thrive Fund - Empower branch.** Make an application to this fund for support with the essential items. Please contact our Student Services team to make an application. Contact: **Leanne Petroff** or **Katie Archibald** ☎ **9488 2300**
- **Accessing [State Schools' Relief](#)** – which covers the cost of new school uniforms, shoes, books and more for disadvantaged students. State Schools' Relief only responds to requests from school principals, assistant principals or welfare coordinators. Parents or Carers who are struggling need to make an appointment with Leanne Petroff or Katie Archibald to discuss their situation.
- **Applying for [Student Scholarships](#)** These are generally awarded on the basis of academic achievement, participation in the school and local community, or financial need, but are not limited to these. The Department of Education and Training administers 35 different student scholarships, equating to approximately 250 scholarship awards as some scholarships have more than one award.
- Finally, discussing your circumstances with our Business Manager, and coming up with an alternative payment arrangement, as outlined in Option C of the Payment Arrangements section of this policy.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

In the case of families experiencing hardship, the key contacts are:

Student Services Team

- Leanne Petroff ☎ **9488 2300**
- Katie Archibald ☎ **9488 2300**

Business Manager:

- Sarah Burns ☎ **9488 2325**

Our team will have confidential discussions with parents/carers about the range of services and supports available to them, and provide advice about how to access those resources. In the case of the Thrive – Fund, the team will assist with the completion of application forms to assess eligibility.

The finance team will also proactively call families to offer assistance if they notice an inability to pay or participate in optional activities such as camps/excursions.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The Parent Payment Policy will be accessible through myNorthcoteHigh.

Northcote High School follows the DET Parent Payment guidelines, which outlines:

- invoices/statements for unpaid essential student learning items or optional items accepted by parents/guardians can be generated and distributed according to parent payment arrangements, but no more than monthly
- only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice per year is sent to all parents/guardians

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/parentpayments.aspx>

The sequence of communication is as follows:

November 2018:

Initial mail out by post that includes a letter outlining the rationale and purpose of parent payments, the Parent Payment Policy, including ESLI, Optional and Voluntary parent payments, and the ESLI Payment Request Form.

December 2018:

Parents/guardians may initiate payments either through commencing an installment option (Option B, above) or paying in full when their child(ren) have their course confirmed at a 1: 1 meeting.

February 2019:

Invoices are mailed out with an explanatory letter.

March 2019:

Thank you letters mailed out to those who have paid voluntary contributions to the Thrive Fund. Invitation to contribute to the Thrive Fund mailed out to those who have not yet contributed to the Thrive Fund.

April 2019:

Mailout of invoices with explanatory letter to those who have not paid ESLI

June 2019:

The Family Statements will be mailed out with a letter of explanation.

July 2019 – November 2019

Once monthly mailout of invoices with explanatory letter to those who have not paid ESLI or are not meeting their installment or payment plan commitments.

Should families have any issues, or wish to make inquiries, they should contact our Accounts Receivable administrator, Cathy Ning or our Business Manager

If families have complaints about the Payments Policy and processes associated with it, they should initially address them to the Business Manager, who will endeavor to assist. Any issues that cannot be resolved at that level will be referred to the Principal.

Families who are unsatisfied with the resolution at the school level they may choose follow the DET Complaints Policy.

The Department's Complaints Policy which includes information about complaint escalation and the role and processes of the Regional Office and Central Office of the Department can be found at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/community/Pages/parentcomplaints.aspx>

Northcote High School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. Families have the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources. If

parents/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.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

School Council:

- sets the annual ESLI levy and the Instrumental music fee after careful analysis of the costs associated with the delivery of essential and optional curricula.
- provide advice and recommendations on the cost (and compliance) of School Camps and Tours.
- monitors the implementation of the Parent Payment Policy at every meeting through ongoing analysis of collection rates and the processes in place to support families.

The Committee of Management for the Thrive Fund monitor the transparency and processes associated with the disbursement of funds from the Empower branch, whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the applicants.

This policy is reviewed annually in line with an analysis of the needs of curricula for the subsequent year, and taking into consideration economic factors, such as the Consumer Price Index.

Date of approval by School Council

08 November 2018

Please refer to the Department of Education and Training website for further details:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/parentpayments.aspx>

PURPOSE

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
- camp, 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