



VET PROGRAM POLICY

RATIONALE

Northcote High School (NHS) is committed to providing students with a range of pathway options including Vocational Education and Training programs (VET). VET subjects are available to NHS students from Year 10 to Year 12 (from Year 9 in Applied Languages both internally and externally). This option allows students to study VET off site as part of their Year 10, VCE or VCE-VM studies.

VET subjects are in addition to the standard curriculum and can incur enrolment fees based on:

1. The costs of the course (tuition) and;
2. The cost of materials/consumables used by the student related to the course not funded by the Department of Education

These costs are set by the institution/organisation of the VET program, not the school. Students may also be required to purchase 'additional items' which they will retain (such as uniform, personal safety equipment, or make-up kits) as part of their enrolment to the host provider on top of the fees outlined above.

Schools receive funding for students to participate in VET programs, this funding is used to partially cover the course tuition and approved materials costs. The cost of the 'additional items' described above and retained by students are to be paid by families. In some cases these costs will be collected by the school on behalf of the VET institution/ organisation. In other cases the VET institution may collect this fee directly from families, or advise families to purchase the items directly from retailers.

In previous years the cost of the materials for the course were to be paid by families. From 2022, the Department of Education (DET) will reimburse VET material fees to government schools to address the cost barrier for families. However, not all VET programs are eligible for reimbursement. Programs undertaken outside of the school curriculum and traineeships undertaken by students outside of school such as in a part-time employment arrangement, and Certificates in General Education or at Diploma level are all excluded.

Where a VET program is not eligible for reimbursement the school (NHS) will require payment from families. The cost of the materials for the course are to be paid by families to ensure the VET program is sustainable

To ensure the VET program continues to be a sustainable option for students at NHS it is important that families pay for any non-funded material/consumable costs and any 'additional items' as requested in full each year.

AIM

The Northcote High School VET Program Financial Management Policy exists to:

- Recognise the importance of effective processes, planning and financial management in relation to VET programs to mitigate financial risk and liability to the school
- Clearly outline the eligibility for DET funded VET material charges
- Clearly define the financial expectations of families related to the enrolment of students in VET programs at NHS and management of any outstanding payment of fees, ensuring VET programs are not at the liability of the school
- To provide opportunities to all students wanting to participate in VET programs and providing families experiencing financial difficulty alternate methods of payment for VET fees through access to payment plans and other funding



GUIDELINES

Enrolment

- Prior to enrolling in VET programs students and their families are explicitly informed that NHS VET programs operate on a user pays basis
- Parents are asked not to enrol students in VET courses with any private providers or providers outside of NMVC, IMVC and/or Melbourne Polytechnic unless there is consultation with the school. There may be exorbitant fees attached to these courses or there may be timetabling issues which preclude students from attending.
- The school will not support a VET application where the financial burden on the school is too great, unless parents are willing to cover the costs prior to commencement of the course.
- During the enrolment process of VET programs families are required to make payment for the program cost in full, or alternatively arranging a structured payment plan with the Finance Team. Refer to the payment plan section of the policy for further information
- Families experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to inform the VET Coordinator of their situation during the enrolment process so support can be provided. Refer to the NHS Financial Hardship Policy for further information.
- Students enrolled in the VET program after the first day of Term 1 are required to make the full annual program payment. This payment is non-refundable.
- Students enrolled in a VET will be placed in VET Study Sessions at NHS. These sessions enable the school to check in with students on their program and support them as needed. Students are expected to attend these as part of their VET program.
- Students who have a history of poor attendance or unsuitable behaviour may be excluded from undertaking external VET courses. As part of our agreement with host providers we are required to exercise due diligence in ensuring that students attending VET are proven independent learners who will engage in the course and attend regularly.
- All students applying to enrol in VET must have their application signed off by a Year Level Program Leader and the VET Coordinator. Where there are concerns regarding behaviour or attendance a meeting will be held to establish the best way to move forward.

Withdrawing Enrolment

- VET is a full year commitment. Students wishing to withdraw enrolment from VET programs mid-year will need permission from the VET Coordinator and their YLPL as soon as possible to allow subject changes to be made at the end of semester.
- The school is charged for student tuition and materials by VET providers at the commencement of the year and therefore these VET fees are non-refundable. Any 'additional items' or non funded material/consumable costs for VET programs charged to families are similarly non-refundable.
- For families making payment of VET programs via payment plan, any outstanding balances must be paid in full prior to withdrawing enrolment.
- Host schools reserve the right to cancel enrolment at any time due to dangerous or unacceptable behaviour. In the case that a student is precluded from continuing their VET course with an external provider any fees paid are not refundable. Moreover, the host school may charge families for any damage to property which results from a student.
- Students who change from a VET subject to another NHS subject mid-year will be required to pay the second semester of VET Tuition Fees. This fee varies between VET courses but usually costs between \$500 and \$1500 per semester. The reason this cost arises is that the



student's school funding will now go towards their new chosen subject, however the school cannot recover the cost of the semester two VET tuition fees

- Students who withdrawal from the VET program after the census date (February 28) and before the end of the year will be required to pay the full remaining course fees of up to \$1500.

DET Reimbursement Funding Eligibility

A VET program will be eligible for reimbursement funding from DET where:

- the program is provided to students undertaking certificates at level II to IV as part of their senior secondary certificate – materials fees for both school based apprentices and trainees (SBATs) and Head Start students are claimable as long as the SBAT is part of the senior secondary certificate and
- the costs were incurred for:
 - items that are necessarily consumed or transformed by students as part of training or assessment
 - activities that must be undertaken for and contribute to training and assessment.

Payment Arrangements for DET excluded programs and material/consumable charges

- Where a family is asked to pay NHS for 'additional items' or non-funded material/consumable costs relating to their VET course, payments will be made in two parts. The first 50% of the fee is due in Term 1. The second payment is due in Term 2. These VET fees are non-refundable.
- VET withdrawal fees should be paid in full before Semester Two commences.
- Payment for VET programs can be made via Compass or in person at the General Office (Cash, Cheque or EFTPOS)
- All families are provided with the opportunity to enter a payment plan for the full payment of VET programs. VET payment plans must be paid in full by March of the year the VET program commences.
- Receipts will be issued to families immediately upon making payment
- All credit card and payment arrangements are kept in a secure place and confidentiality maintained

NB: Internal students do not pay materials fees for VET in Applied Languages. Costs are covered by band funding. External VET students pay the materials fees recommended by the NMVC or IMVC VET clusters or by Melbourne Polytechnic

Payment Plans for DET excluded programs and material/consumable charges

- Families wanting to request a personalised payment plan must inform the VET Coordinator. Once approved this can be arrange with the Finance Team.
- VET payment plans must be paid in full by March of the year when the VET program commences.
- Families entering payment plans are provided with the scheduled dates for debit of payments
- Families making payment for VET programs via a payment plan are required to ensure there are sufficient funds for payments to be debited on the scheduled dates
- Families are responsible for informing the VET Coordinator and Finance Team if there are any changes to their situation, including updating of card details, insufficient funds or to request a reschedule of payment



- If there are failed payment plan payments and families have not informed the VET Coordinator of their situation the student may be withdrawn from the VET program or unable to attend the program until payment is made

Managing Outstanding Fees for DET excluded programs and material/consumable charges

- VET programs operate on a user pays basis
- Payment of VET program fees are monitored closely by the VET Coordinator and Business Manager
- Should payment of VET program fees continue to not be paid or refused VET Coordinator in consultation with the Business Manager and the Finance Sub Committee of School Council have the right to withdraw any student from the program, effective immediately

Financial Management of VET Programs for DET excluded programs and material/consumable charges

- The Finance Team will operate and code all revenue and expenditure for VET programs back to Department of Education and Training Cases21 Finance. The Department of Education and Training CASES21 Accounting software package is to be reconciled with VET programs program budgets each month
- The NHS Finance Sub Committee of School Council will have a standing item on their meeting agenda regarding the financial management of VET programs
- Minutes of these meetings and any documentation detailing the financial management of VET programs are tabled at School Council
- The Business Manager and VET Coordinator are in constant communication to ensure any liability to the school is reduced, ensuring outstanding fees are paid and management of program budget
- The Business Manager will provide the VET Coordinator and VET Administrator details of outstanding fees to be followed up on a weekly basis in December and February each year.
- The VET Coordinator is responsible for following up and ensuring VET program fees are paid (including the monitoring of payment plans).

EVALUATION

Policy to be reviewed annually under the guidance of the Finance Committee and ratified by School Council. All policies are evaluated in line with DET guidelines and policies and NHS values.