

<b>400 COUNCIL AND FINANCE</b>	
<b>400 Parent Payments Policy</b>	
School Policy and Advisory Guide Reference: <a href="https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/parent-payment/policy">https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/parent-payment/policy</a>	Last Update December 2020
<b>Last Ratified by School Council</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b>
<b>Responsible Line Manager</b>	John McVean

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.

This policy ensures that:

- costs are kept to a minimum
- payment requests are clearly itemised under the three parent payment categories
- items that students consume or take possession of are accurately costed
- no student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution
- access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment for any of the three categories.

Wodonga Senior Secondary College spends considerable time selecting the most appropriate items and services to meet the needs of our students.

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.

Our letter to parents/guardians for 2020 containing parent payment arrangements can be found at this link:  
<http://www.wssc.vic.edu.au/?p=29995>

### 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 or guardians are requested to pay the school to provide or may provide themselves, if appropriate.

See attached link to view our current Subject Information Guide for 2020/2021 which details all course fees  
<http://www.wssc.vic.edu.au/?p=26762#SubjectInfo>

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, 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
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes
- school-based performances, productions and events
- school magazines, class photographs.

**Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents or guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust.

### **College Support for those students/families with Financial Issues.**

In recognition of the cost of education, the College has already implemented a text-book hire program which reduces the cost of such items for students considerably over the three years they are enrolled. Specific texts for study in English and workbooks are not part of this hire system.

Centrelink arrangements, Centre Pay, can be made for families receiving benefits who wish to take advantage of a part payment each fortnight approach to the payment of fees and laptop acquisition.

In cases of extreme need, families will need to meet with the AP Student Wellbeing, Social Worker or EAL Coordinator to explore available options. There are services in the community that can be accessed for financial support depending on circumstances.

It is expected that students and families will contribute a designated amount to the cost of education at WSSC even when receiving a degree of financial consideration. Payment plans can be organised at the General Office once an agreement on support has been reached.

Assessment of the degree of support a student/family may receive will be made by the abovementioned personnel, recorded on form 400.01 and signed off by the College Business Manager.

### **Student/Parent Requests for Consideration of Financial Disadvantage**

The College recognises the difficulties that may be faced by some students/families in meeting their financial obligations to the school at times. The following list is a guide to ascertaining a general level of financial status for WSSC families. Note that every student's situation is unique and for many students, their ability to pay their subject fees and text books is not always directly related to family income. Hence there is a need for the following list to be taken into consideration to form part of a wider picture of the holistic context of a student's capacity for financial responsibility.

- Family has a health care card
- Family is in receipt of means tested Centrelink benefits, allowances or pensions
- Student resides in a single parent family
- No parent is in consistent, well paid employment
- Student is independent
- Parent or independent student approaches school re financial support
- WSSC wellbeing or other human service organisation approaches school re financial support
- Family are recently settled on humanitarian visas
- No other financial support can be accessed through another agency

It is important to remember that each student or family is treated and assessed on an individual basis according to their specific circumstances at a particular point in time. From a wellbeing perspective, the above guidelines may only show one aspect of the students experience and there are often extenuating circumstances that affect the assessment.