

Essential Education Items, Optional Extras & Voluntary Financial Contributions PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY - 2014

Rationale:

This policy outlines the position of Somerville Secondary College in respect to parent payments to the school. It covers payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions that the school may request.

Aims:

- To identify essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions
- To provide information to parents and the school community in respect of parent payments to Somerville Secondary College
- To ensure parent payment requests are kept to a minimum

Implementation:

- Parents and guardians are to be provided with early notice of requests for all payments to the College.
- A minimum of 6 weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year should be given to allow time for financial planning for confirmed annual school charges. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year.
- Payment arrangements and referral to support agencies will be made available to all parents/guardians where families have difficulty making payments.
- The State Government's Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), the Commonwealth Government's Youth Allowance is available to assist eligible parents and students with the cost of education.
- The College will explore ways to make quality second-hand books and uniforms available.
- All parent payments are receipted through the Department required accounting software CASES 21 and issued to parents via their students or by mail.
- Access to enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment of financial contributions.
- The status and details of payments and non-payments by parents and guardians are confidential and are not available for public information.
- Initial payment requests, letters or invoices for student materials & services charges will be accompanied by a description of the payment category, how the payment will be spent by the school, the availability of payment options and a copy of this policy.
- The College may elect to notify parents of outstanding charges by posting a Statement of Accounts to the person nominated to receive correspondence for a particular student. The accounts are normally processed once a term, but in some instances may be processed more often, where directed by College Council and / or the Principal.
- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) – payments may be but are not required to be signed over to the College.
- The EMA will not be used to offset optional extra and voluntary financial contributions unless so directed by the recipient.
- Somerville Secondary College will not provide credit in advance, including the use of the Education Maintenance Allowance, for the purchase of books, stationery or uniform from outsourced suppliers.
- If parents /guardians choose to provide equivalent materials for essential items from sources other than the school, the items must meet the specifications provided by the College. Some items (e.g. food provision for home economics) which due to their nature, can only be provided by the College.

- Elective / subject charges are requested to be paid prior to the commencement of each year where the elective runs for the full year. Where the elective runs for part of that school year payment will be requested a minimum of 6 weeks prior to commencement of the course.
- A deposit may be required upon enrolment in an individual elective to confirm the enrolment and the purchase of specialist materials for the selected course.
- There may be instances where demand for a particular elective subject is high and students may be put on a waiting list. Every effort is made to accommodate the individual student's needs within the constraints of the College timetable and class numbers.
- Parents/Guardians are provided with alternative options for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp.
- Where a parent or student fails to pay the expected elective charge and only after reasonable time has been allowed for payment to occur, the student may, at the Principal's discretion, be offered an alternative lower or no cost elective in replacement of the higher cost elective. It is an expectation that the alternative elective will be paid in full within two (2) weeks of commencement if a lower cost is involved.

★ Parent Supported Materials and Services – Essential Education Items

Essential education items are those items used in the course of instruction in the standard curriculum program that parents/guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide. It is a normal and reasonable expectation that these charges are met in full by the parents, guardians or students. Where an elective charge is levied, every effort is made to ensure that the best negotiated price is obtained for all items included in that elective / subject charge. Essential Education Items include:

- materials that the individual student takes possession of, including textbooks and student stationery. (e.g. Student organiser/planner, College produced curriculum workbooks, handbooks and instructional materials)
- Materials that the individual student consumes or takes possession of the finished article. (e.g. home economics, ceramics, photography etc.)
- school uniform as per the College uniform policy
- camps and excursions which are integral to the standard curriculum and which all students are expected to attend

★ Parent Supported Materials and Services – Optional Extras

Optional extras are those that are provided in addition to the standard curriculum program, and which are offered to all students. These items are provided on a user pays basis and if parents/guardians choose to access them for students, they will be required to pay for them.

- Instructional support materials beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program. (e.g. student computer printing & internet access for personal, recreational or non school use)
- Extracurricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program or provided by outside specialists (e.g. Instrumental music)
- College based performances, productions and events
- the difference between the basic materials/services provided and a selected higher cost alternative which may be more desirable
- materials and services offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (e.g. College magazine, locks)
- College facilities and equipment not associated with the provision of the standard curriculum program (e.g. hire or lease of equipment such as musical instruments, lockers etc.)

★ Parent Voluntary Contributions

School Councils may invite parents with students enrolled at the school, or anyone else to make a voluntary contributions / donations to the school. Somerville Secondary College may invite voluntary contribution for the following purposes:

- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the College. (e.g. equipment, materials or services)
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the College.
- Contributions to a building trust fund or contributions to a library trust fund (these funds are approved by the Australian Taxation Office and are tax deductible)

No student will be denied access to the standard educational programs by non payment of Parent Voluntary Contributions.

❖ **NON CURRICULUM RELATED ACTIVITIES:**

Participation in non-curriculum related activities, not limited to but including activities such as Formals, Debutante Balls, Yr 12 Valedictory Dinner and various extra-curricular camps and excursions may be restricted if a participating student's "Essential Education Items" charges have not been paid in full.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was last ratified by the College Board at Board Meeting held	17 th February 2014
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