PURPOSE:

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program, and empowers School Councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and to raise funds.

Free instruction includes learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities associated with the provision of the standard curriculum program.

School Councils can request payments from parents for student materials and service charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:

1. **Essential education items** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child. (eg. stationery, text books and school uniforms where required)

2. **Optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and carers may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in. (eg. extra curricula programs or activities, school-based performances or events)

3. **Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school (eg. grounds beautification, additional computers).

IMPLEMENTATION:

1. This policy is based on the DET Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools policy which was issued in conjunction with Circular S135-2010 on 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2014.

2. School Council and the Finance Committee will ensure that the school complies with the DET policy.

3. The school is to provide parents with early notice of requests for payment of Essential Education Items, Optional Extras and Voluntary Financial Contributions, ie a minimum of 6 weeks notice. Payment may be requested, but not required, prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

4. The school will ensure that the status and details of any payments or non-payments by parents/guardians are confidential.

5. The school may issue only one request for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice.

6. **Essential Education Items** –
   
   i. Essential items include materials that the individual student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery and art supplies.

   ii. Parents and guardians must be given the option of purchasing equivalent materials from other sources.
7. **Optional Extras** – Optional extras include instructional support material, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program, camps and excursions, school-based performances, productions and events.

8. **Voluntary Financial Contributions** – Schools may invite parents and guardians to make a donation in the form of a voluntary financial contribution to the school. These may include:
   i. Contributions to a building or library trust fund;
   ii. Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school;
   iii. General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

9. Parents who have difficulty paying for essential items are to be directed to a range of support options, including:
   i. State Schools Relief Committee for uniform requirements;
   ii. The option to purchase essential items through a local supplier where appropriate;
   iii. The availability of alternate payment options and an invitation to contact the Principal to discuss.

10. **Payment Arrangements and Non-Payment** -
    i. Students will not be treated differently, denied access to the standard curriculum program, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions;
    ii. all students will have access to the standard curriculum program
    iii. parents and guardians will be provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp
    iv. Invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.
    v. Receipts are issued to parents after processing through CASES21 for items over and including $10.
    vi. only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is to be sent to all parents and guardians
    vii. under no circumstances will collectors of any type including debt collectors, be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents and guardians
    viii. the Principal will ensure any records of payment or contribution by parents and guardians is kept confidential
    ix. the public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is deemed unacceptable and will not occur in any circumstances.

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School Council Finance Sub-Committee 2016

Review Date: To be reviewed annually in line with DET requirements.