

# WARRAGUL REGIONAL COLLEGE

# STUDENT FEES POLICY

## (FINANCE)

NOVEMBER 2009

### PURPOSE

To ensure that any payments collected from parent are consistent with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and DEECD guidelines. The Act sets out provision of free instruction in the standard program and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services used in the course instruction and to raise funds.

### GUIDELINES

- Free instruction is offered for learning and teaching, instructional supports, materials and resources, administration and facilities associated with the provision of the standard curriculum program.
- School councils will develop policy and plans to allocate their overall resources – human, financial and physical – in accordance with the goals, targets and strategies outlined in their strategic plan. This includes the allocation of funding provided under the SRP, any other funding provided by DEECD and locally-raised funds.
- The College will ensure parents and guardians will be fully informed about the College Parent Payment Policy and processes.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- The College via the Finance committee and the College Council responsible for developing and approving a school-level policy which covers essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions. This school-level policy will meet the community's expectations and be provided to parents and guardians. The College will ensure that parent payments are kept to a minimum and must not exceed the cost of the relevant materials or services to the student.
- The College will request payments from parents for student materials and services charges, and for voluntary financial contributions. These payments fall into three categories:
  - 1. Associated Learning Materials Charge** which parents and guardians are **required** to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. stationery, text books and school uniforms where required)
  - 2. Optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may **choose** whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. school magazines, extra curricular programs or activities, high cost electives)
  - 3. Voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be **invited** to donate to the school (e.g. ground, building and library fund, chaplaincy).

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- **Payment arrangements and non-payment:** The College will ensure that:
  - students are not 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
  - all students have access to the standard curriculum program
  - parents and guardians are provided with an alternative option for their children if they choose not to participate in an excursion or camp
  - 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
  - administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting
  - receipts to be issued to parents immediately upon payment
  - only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to all parents and guardians
  - under no circumstances can collectors of any type, including debt collectors, be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents and guardians
- Any record of payments or contributions by parents and guardians is kept confidential. The public identification of students or their parents and guardians who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is unacceptable and must not occur in any circumstance.
- The College will advise parents and guardians in receipt of the Victorian Government's Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) that, where relevant, they have the option of providing essential education items themselves or authorising the school to direct part of the school's portion of the family's EMA towards particular items. The College ensure that it has a transparent process for the administration of the EMA.
- The College will support parents who have difficulty paying for essential items and will make available a range of support options including: the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), the School Start Bonus, Schools Relief Committee, welfare and support agencies, Centre link payment plans and payment by instalments.

### EVALUATION

This policy is to be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with DEECD guidelines.