



NATHALIA SECONDARY COLLEGE

Parent Payment Policy

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.

Nathalia 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.

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.

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.



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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.

Second-hand book and uniform shop

In order to support parents in meeting the costs of their children's education the school operates a second-hand bookstall and second-hand school uniform shop.

Other support options

The school appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments and contributions. A range of support options are available to assist eligible parents, including the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and State Schools Relief Committee support.

Payment arrangements

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions (e.g. a minimum of six weeks notice prior to the end of the previous school year).

Costs will be kept to a minimum with payment requests/letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

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| Option A | Full amount at the beginning of Term 1 |
| Option B | Payment at the beginning of each Term |
| Option C | Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3) |
| Option D | Other payment arrangements |

Alternative payment options are available through the school and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.



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Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests to parents will be itemised and the category each item falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional extras will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued per year to parents and guardians.

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.



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Information sheet for schools: Examples of items/services, potential categories and why

This table provides some examples of education items and services, identifies if they fall under free instruction or a parent payment category and the reasons why.

Item/service	Category/Rationale
Class sets	Free instruction – if temporarily used by students in class, considered an instructional resource owned by the school.
Consumables	<p>Free instruction – if consumable materials held by the school (e.g. cooking ingredients) and are required to provide the standard curriculum (such as paint, tissues, glue, laboratory chemicals, etc). These materials held by the school (instructional resources owned by the school) and distributed to students when required in class.</p> <p>Essential Education Item – where the student takes possession of an article and the amount of material actually kept by the student is not costed and it is at a significant cost, such as photography, ingredients for home economics, etc.</p>
Excursions/Camps	<p>Essential Education Item – when associated with, but not part of, the standard curriculum program, i.e. travel, accommodation, etc. can be charged.</p> <p>Optional extra – when in addition to the standard curriculum.</p>
First Aid/School Nurses	Free instruction – as schools have a duty of care to ensure students provide appropriate first aid.
Graduations/school formals	Optional extra – not essential to providing the standard curriculum.
Hire of text books from school	Essential Education Item – items that a student has possession of for the duration of the subject and then returns to the school (not necessarily pay full price for texts).
School programs to provide students with mobile computing devices (netbooks, notebook computers, or tablet computers)	<p>For information on how to implement these programs and legislative obligations, refer to the <u>School Policy and Advice – Personal Devices</u> (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/npersonaldev.aspx)</p>
Performances/activities provided by outside specialists (e.g. ‘incursions’ that are equivalent to excursions but are held at the school)	<p>Essential Education Item – when essential to support instruction in the standard curriculum program, costs that are equivalent to the use of facilities or equipment may be charged for.</p> <p>Optional extra – when provided in addition to the standard curriculum.</p>



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	program.
Photocopying or printing	<p>Free instruction – if materials provided to students are required for the standard curriculum program.</p> <p>Essential Education Item – when the school is providing a resource or chapter instead of requiring a text book to be purchased or the student to take possession of the item; or when equivalent to student resources such as students printing out assignments.</p> <p>Optional extra – when it is extracurricular or not essential to the standard curriculum program.</p>
Student Insurance	Optional extra – not essential to providing the standard curriculum program.
Student ID Cards	Free instruction – can be considered administration that is required to provide the standard curriculum program.

Note: If a school chooses to use headings such as *Subject levy* or *Electives* with a total cost, an itemised list of what makes up the total cost under these headings is required so that parents understand what they are being asked to pay for. The parent payment policy principles apply i.e. what is considered to be free instruction, essential education item or optional extra.