Policy Statement:

- To provide high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.

- No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.

Rationale:

- The Education & Training Reform Act 2006 empowers school councils to charge parents for goods and services used in the course of instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds. As the quality and variety of educational programs offered by our school are enhanced by doing so, our School Council requests payment from parents for certain student materials and services charges, and for modest voluntary financial contributions.

- 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. Winters Flat Primary School has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our students.

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 and guardians are responsible for and may choose to either provide or pay the school to provide.

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;
- school uniform;
- transport and entrance for camps, excursions and incursions, 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:
- extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. Instrumental Music, RE, Chess Program
- school-based performances, productions and events; and
• class photographs.

**Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school such as Grounds Levy which helps in maintaining the grounds in a clean, tidy and safe environment for students.

**Implementation:**

• Parents will be made aware of the costs associated with all payments and voluntary contributions by December of the previous year, along with a recommended payments schedule.

• All payments and non-payments will be strictly confidential. The public identification of students or their parents where payments have or have not been received will not occur.

• All costs and processes associated with parent payments and voluntary contributions will be reasonable, will be defensible in relation to Department of Education requirements, and will be within the expectations of the school community in consultation with School Council.

• As with all parent payments to the school, Winters Flat Primary School will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the Principal.

• Statements will be mailed to families at the beginning of each Term by the Business Manager. Statements are available to families at all times and can be accessed by making a request at the office.

• Unpaid Essential Items payments will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family. Unpaid Optional Extras payments may compromise a student’s ability to be involved in the optional activity in the future. Unpaid Voluntary Financial Contributions do not constitute a non-payment and will not result in any detriment by the school to the student or family.

• No collectors of any type, including debt collectors, will be used to obtain funds from parents or students.

• 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 parents; Centrepay, who can arrange to have an amount deducted from Centrelink payments and State Schools Relief Committee support.

• Any portion of a families account in credit not expended by the end of the year will be returned to the parent/guardian unless there is agreement reached with the parent/guardian that this money can be carried over into the next year.

• The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and adhere to it.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed biannually. The Finance Committee will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually, and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education.
References

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Parent Payments in Victorian Government schools policy

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year cycle of review.

This policy was last ratified by School Council February 2015