PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES
Rye Primary School Council will annually review parent payments requested to ensure they are in line with Department of Education & Training guidelines. Charges will be clearly itemized, costed and categorized as Essential Education Items, Optional Items or Voluntary Contributions.

Parent contribution requests will be made in line with the principles of educational value, access, equity and inclusion, affordability, engagement and support, respect and confidentiality, transparency and accountability.

Parent contributions will be requested to assist the school in providing an enhanced teaching and learning program for every student, in line with the school’s priorities.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS
Parents will be provided with early notification of annual payment requests (a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the end of the previous school year). Reasonable notice will be given for any other payment requests during the year (i.e. excursions, camps).

Parents will be permitted to make payments in instalments and be provided with several methods of payment, such as, BPAY, eft, direct , cash direct bank deposit or in person at the school office. Parents are able to enter into confidential payment plan arrangements by contacting the school’s Principal (Jackie Annable) on 5985 2363.

FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS
- Camps, Sports & Excursion Funding (CSEF) will be available to eligible parents/carers
- The school seeks suppliers of educational items who provide not only competitive prices, but also quality of product and service.
- Local support agencies provide assistance where possible to families in need.

CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP
The school understands that families may experience financial difficulties or hardship at times and may be unable to meet full or part payments requested. Families are invited to contact the Assistant Principal, Mr. Lachlan Featherston, to discuss their payment ability and plans when experiencing defined financial hardship on 5985 2363.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES
The Parent Payment Policy will be published on the school’s website, and will also be distributed to families each year along with the annual payment request.

General enquiries regarding parent charges may be made to the school office on 5985 2363.

Concerns should be directed to the Principal (Jackie Annable).

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY
The School Council (via the Finance Committee) will conduct an annual review of the implementation of the Parent Payment Policy, including addressing any concerns raised by the school community. Any changes to the Policy implementation will be reported back to the school community via the newsletter and/or Tiqbiz.

Signed: School Council President: __________  
Signed Copy Held at School Office  18/10/16

This policy was last ratified by School Council on:  16/08/2016  +  18/10/16
RYE PRIMARY SCHOOL - HARDSHIP POLICY

Rationale
The Education & Training Reform Act 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. School Council recognizes that some families experience financial hardship (wants to pay but cannot) from time to time and in an effort to ensure the best possible education for each child, the following opportunities are available for all families at our school.

Aims
To provide opportunities for children of families experiencing financial hardship to participate in the full breadth of educational experiences as are enjoyed by all students.

Implementation
- School Council supplements Department of Education and Training funds by requesting payments from parents for the following items:-
  - Essential Education Items which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide e.g.: stationary booklists, text books and uniforms etc.
  - Optional Extras which are offered on a user pays basis and parents can choose whether or not their child participates e.g.: instrumental music tuition or instrument hire, camps and excursions etc.
- In addition, School Council invites parents to make donations by means of:-
  - Voluntary Financial Contributions which are non-compulsory donations for specific projects e.g.: library resources, grounds projects, technologies or equipment.
- Parents will be made aware of the costs associated will all payments and voluntary contributions six weeks prior to the due date along with a recommended payments schedule where possible.
- The Parent Payments schedule will include itemized details relating to all payments, an option to purchase goods elsewhere (where appropriate), essential payment dates, options to make payments by instalments, clear definitions of the category of any payments (i.e.: Essential, Optional or Voluntary)
- No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program for not making a payment or voluntary contribution.
- Parents will be made aware of any government financial support schemes (e.g.: the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund - CSEF), and payments may be aligned with these benefits plus advice to parents to contact the principal if they require support or additional information.
- Council will provide opportunities for all parents experiencing financial difficulties to enter into alternative and confidential payment arrangements with the business manager or principal.
- Access to the State School’s Relief program for families in financial need will be conveyed to parents.
- School Council will also make available a modest annual discretionary budget that the principal may use to assist families experiencing financial hardship. The funds for this support will be directed from the Voluntary Component on the book packs 2017 which requests families may like to donate towards families less well off than others. Any amount will be accepted.
- All payments and non-payments by families, and participants in any school financial support programs will be strictly confidential.

Evaluation
School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually. In doing so, Council will also consider its financial support programs and any Departmental advice or instruction.

Signed: School Council President: ________________________________

Signed Copy held at School office

This policy was ratified at School Council on 16th August 2016 and will be reviewed in July 2017.
RYE PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT PAYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

PURPOSE
To ensure that parent payment practices are consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to the standard curriculum.

RATIONALE
The Victorian community shares a vision to build an education system that champions excellence and ensures that every child and young person has access to the opportunities to succeed in life, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Schools are best placed to make local decisions which ensure that all students can access a broad range of learning opportunities that support their expectations and promote their aspirations as they move through the education system. Parent contribution, in all forms, assists schools to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student and is highly valued by school communities.

Learning and teaching programs vary across schools based on local needs and circumstances and reflect each school's priorities, decisions and resources. This, in turn, informs the parent payment charges approved by school councils that may vary from one school to the next.

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS CHARGE FOR?
The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides for instruction in the standard curriculum program to be free to all students in government schools. School councils are responsible for developing and approving school-level parent payment charges and can request payments from parents under three categories only—Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items and Voluntary Financial Contributions.

Essential Student Learning Items are those items, activities or services that are essential to support student learning of the standard curriculum. These are items that the school considers essential for all students and which students take possession of. Parents may choose to provide the items themselves or buy the items from the school where practical and appropriate.

Optional Items are those items, activities or services that are offered in addition to or support instruction in the standard curriculum program. These are provided on a user-pays basis so that if parents choose to access them for students, they are required to pay for them.

Voluntary Financial Contributions
Parents can be invited to make a donation to the school for a general or specific purpose, e.g. school grounds projects, library fund or for new equipment. Only some Voluntary Financial Contributions are tax-deductible.

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1 Parent in the policy has the same meaning as in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, which is: 'parent', in relation to a child, includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child including parental responsibility under the Family Law Act 1975 of the Commonwealth and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.
The attached diagram "Understanding Parent Payment Categories" provides examples of items and materials under each category.

In implementing this policy, schools must adhere to the following principles:

**PRINCIPLES**

- **Educational value**: Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount when schools determine their parent payments practices.

- **Access, equity and inclusion**: All students have access to the standard curriculum program and participation of all students to the full school program is facilitated.

- **Affordability**: Cost to parents is kept to a minimum and is affordable for most families at the school.

- **Engagement and Support**: Early identification and engagement strategies by the school ensure parents are well informed of the payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship.

- **Respect and Confidentiality**: Parents and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgment and the identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments.

- **Transparency and Accountability**: School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils.

**COST AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS**

When school councils consider the proposed requests for parent payments the cost is kept to a minimum and is affordable to most parents at the school.

School principals must ensure that:

- items students consume or take possession of are accurately costed.

- payment requests are broadly itemized within the appropriate category.

- parents are advised that they have the option of purchasing equivalent Essential Student Learning Items themselves, in consultation with the school.

- information on payment options is available, accessible and easily understood to all parents so that they know what to expect and what supports they can access.

- parents are provided with early notice of annual payment requests for school fees (i.e. a minimum of six weeks' notice prior to the end of the previous school year). This enables parents to save and budget accordingly.

- parents are provided with reasonable notice of any other payment requests that arise during the school year- ensuring parents have a clear understanding of the full financial contribution being sought.

- the status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential and only shared with relevant school personnel.

- parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding school fees from one year to the next.

- use of debt collectors to obtain outstanding school funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted.

- there will be only one reminder notice to parents for voluntary financial contributions per year.
- Invoices/statements for unpaid essential or optional items accepted by parents are not generated more than monthly or according to the parent payment arrangement with the school.

**SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**
Families may experience financial difficulties and may be unable to meet the full or part payments requested. Principals and school councils exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent payment fees. There are a range of support options available to support and assist parents. These can be accessed through "Cost support for families."

Consideration to hardship arrangements in respect to payment requests is provided to families experiencing long term hardship or short term crisis on a confidential, case by case basis. All schools have written hardship arrangements that include a proactive approach to providing support for parents experiencing financial difficulty.

All parents are provided the name and contact details of a nominated parent payment contact person at the school who they can discuss payment arrangements with.

**ENGAGING WITH PARENTS**
In respect to each school’s development of its parent payments, school councils will engage in effective communication with the school community and have strategies in place to ensure they are aware of and understand the needs and views of parents.

**REVIEW OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**
Schools will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of this policy at least annually as part of its ongoing improvement and report back to the school community.

The full Parent Payment Policy is available from the Department’s School Policy and Advisory Guide. Answers to the most commonly asked questions about school costs for parents see: Frequently Asked Questions – For Parents
Understanding Parent Payment Categories

**Schools**

**What does the legislation say?**

The Education and Training Reform Act (2006) provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also empowers school councils to charge fees to parents for goods and services provided by the school to a child.

In the Act, a 'Parent' includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for a child including parental responsibility under the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975 and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

**What do schools pay for as part of 'free instruction'?**

Free instruction is the teaching staff, administration and the provision of facilities in connection with the instruction of the standard curriculum program, including reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

The standard curriculum for Years F-10 means implementation of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

The standard curriculum for senior secondary schools means a program that enables a student to be awarded a VCE or VCAL qualification.

**What principles govern parent payment practice?**

Educational Value | Access, Equity & Inclusion | Affordability
Engagement & Support | Respect & Confidentiality | Transparency & Accountability

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**Parents**

**What may parents be asked to pay for?**

Schools can request payment for

**Essential Student Learning Items**

These are items, activities or services that the school deems essential to student learning of the standard curriculum.

Where practical and appropriate, parents may choose to purchase items through the school or provide their own.

These may also be either:

- Items the student takes temporary or permanent possession of
  - e.g. textbooks, activity books, exercise books, stationery, book bags, student ID cards, locks, cooking ingredients
- Activities associated with instruction that all students are expected to attend
  - i.e. travel, entry fees or accommodation
  - e.g. excursions, incursions, school sports, work placements

Schools can request payment for

**Optional Items**

These are items, activities or services that are optional and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.

Students may access these on a user-pays basis.

These may be either:

- Items the student purchases or hires
  - e.g. school magazines, class photos, functions, formal, graduation dinners, materials for extra-curricular programs, student accident insurance
- Activities the student purchases
  - e.g. fees for extra-curricular programs or activities, such as instrumental music tuition, fees for guest speakers, camps, excursions, incursions, sports, entry fees for school run performances

Parents can be asked to pay for items, activities and services in the three Parent Payment Categories:

- **Essential Student Learning Items**
- **Optional Items**
- **Voluntary Financial Contributions**

Schools determine how items, activities and services are classified within these categories based on the learning and teaching program of their school.

Support for families experiencing hardship is available at every school and each school has a parent payment contact person. See your school's policy for more information.

For more information on Parent Payments and Personal Devices, visit the DET website at: www.education.vic.gov.au

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**Voluntary Financial Contributions**

- e.g. Building or Library fund (Tax deductible)
- Voluntary contributions for a specific purpose, such as equipment, materials, services.
- General voluntary contributions