Parent/Carer Payment Policy 2015

General Statement
This policy provides information regarding parent/carer payments in government schools. The policy covers payments for essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions that schools may request, and the parameters, terms and conditions within which these requests may be made.

Rationale
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. Northern School for Autism School Council may request payments or contributions for education items and services from the parents/carers of students in Victorian government schools in the three categories – essential education items, optional education items and voluntary financial contributions.

Implementation

Parent/carer Payment Categories

1. 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 (e.g. cooking program); and
   - transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

2. 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, internet access for recreational or non-school use;
   - extra-curricular programs or activities e.g. instrumental music, dance classes, swimming;
   - school-based performances, productions and events; and
   - school magazines, newsletters, class photographs.

3. Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services where parents and guardians are invited to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust. NSA does not request voluntary contributions.
Support Options
NSA appreciates that families may sometimes experience financial difficulties in meeting requests for payments. Parents/carers are requested to contact the school if they require financial support. From 2015 the Education Maintenance Allowance is no longer available.

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

To assist parents with payments, several payment schedules are available:

- Full amount
- Payment at the beginning of each term
- Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3)
- Other payment arrangements by negotiation

Several payment options are also available:

- BPay
- Eftpos
- Cheque
- Direct Deposit
- Cash

Payment requests will be kept to a minimum, will be fair and reasonable

- Payments may be requested at, but not required prior to, the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.
- The Parent/Carer Payment Policy and PPI will be attached to invoices for both essential education items and optional education items.
- Receipts will be issued to parents/carers immediately upon making payment.
- Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items will be generated and distributed once a term.
- All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents/carers are kept confidential.

References:

Review: This policy is reviewed annually in Term 3.

Ratified by NSA School Council: 30.10.2014
Parent/Carer Payments - processes, protocols and implementation

Parent/carer payments 2015

There will be no voluntary contributions requested in 2015. The voluntary contribution cost will be absorbed into essential education items. Some items for which the school was asking parent to bring cash for prior to 2015 will now be included in the essential education items to minimise the amount of cash coming into the school. A 3% increase for CPI has also been incorporated into the payments. The total cost for essential educational items will be $110 per term/ $440 per year as per the itemised list below:

Essential Education Items

$10 - Bike Education  
$10 - eLearning (iPads, computers, educational software & licenses)  
$10 - NSA Bus Fee  
$10 - Communication/Literacy Materials (schedules, PECs folders, visuals, personalised readers communication temptations)  
$10 - Consumables (stationery, laminating, sensory materials, reinforcers)  
$10 - Excursion/Incursion Fee  
$35 - Cooking Fee (previously this was paid weekly in cash to classrooms)  
$2.50 - Mothers’ Day/Fathers’ Day Stall (previously paid in cash)  
$12.50 - Special lunches, Yearbook, Concert DVD and Library Books  
$110.00 - Total

Discount on Essential Educational Items: Parents/carers who make the full annual payment of $440 for essential educational items by the end of Term 1 will be provided with a 10% discount of $44.

Optional Education Items

The swimming program costs approximately $80 to $100 per term depending upon the number of sessions offered. Parents/carers will be invoiced the end of the term prior to swimming being offered. Swimming is an optional program. If parents/carers elect for their child not to participate in swimming then they do not have to pay the fee. For students in the Later Years Sub-school, TAFE is an optional program which requires a separate payment.

Voluntary Contributions

There are no voluntary contributions.

Tax deductions for parents/carers for payments made to NSA

Due to changes in legislation, reimbursement to parents/carers, for costs associated with educating children, are now reimbursed automatically via Human Services – Schoolkids Bonus payment. For more information follow the link: [http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/information/schoolkids-bonus](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/information/schoolkids-bonus).