Policy Statement

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.

The standard curriculum program includes the core learning and teaching activities associated with the National Curriculum (AusVELS) and senior secondary certificates such as the VCE including VET in Schools programs.

School councils are responsible for developing a school-level policy which covers essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

These payments fall into three categories:

1. essential education items which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the school to provide for their child (e.g. for stationery, ID Cards, text books and school uniforms where required, and all electives as outlined in the curriculum handbooks);
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. for school magazines or extra-curricular programs or activities ); and
3. voluntary financial contributions which parents and guardians may be invited to donate to the school (e.g. for additional computers, Building, Building Maintenance and Library Funds).

Guidelines

1.1 Seymour College School Council can request payments from parents for student materials and services charges and for voluntary financial contributions.

1.2 Essential Education Items

Parents and guardians can be asked to pay for essential education items. This includes:

- items which students take possession of, including text books and student stationery, ID Cards;
materials for learning and teaching where your child consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (for example: all electives as outlined in the curriculum handbooks);
- school uniform;
- travel costs incurred in the course of receiving the instruction from a teacher or other person; and
- essential services associated with, but not considered to be part of, 'instruction' in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (for example, transport and entrance costs).

1.3 Optional Extras

Optional extras are those that are provided in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are to be provided on a user-pays basis and if you choose to access them for your child you will be required to pay for them. These items include:

- instructional supports, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program;
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (for example, instrumental music tuition);
- entry fees for school run performances, productions and events;
- materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials or services required for the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable (for example, the use of more expensive materials);
- materials and services offered in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’ (for example, school magazines or school photographs); and
- school facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the ‘standard curriculum program’, and not otherwise provided for through the School Resources Package (for example hire/lease of equipment such as musical instruments or purchase of laptops).

1.4 Voluntary Contributions

Seymour College School encourage voluntary financial contributions for the following:

- contributions in support of the educational needs by school curriculum leaders,
- contributions to ATO approved and tax deductible funds:
  - Nil
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

1.5 Parent details of contribution or non-payment will be confidential.

1.6 The Principal and school council has the responsibility of making sure that no student is disadvantaged if parents are unable to pay the voluntary contribution.

1.6.1. A range of support options are available, including: Access to State Schools’ Relief Committee support via the Director of Student Services which can assist with clothing/uniforms.

1.7 Administrative and Payment Processes

1.7.1 Administrative and financial processes are compliant with Departmental requirements such as CASES 21 financial reporting.

1.7.2 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.

1.7.3 Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice per year is sent to all parents/guardians.

1.7.4 Receipts are issued to parents immediately upon payment and receipted on CASES 21.

Evaluation

The School Council is to review this policy annually.
This policy will be made available on the College’s website.