The Education & Training Reform Act 2006 allows school councils 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.

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. These items include:
- materials that the student takes possession of, including text books and student stationery;
- school uniform; (school uniform is supplied by LOWES)
- camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend as part of the school curriculum.

Mernda Primary has spent considerable time selecting the most appropriate requisites to meet the needs of our children. The book packs contain high quality materials at a competitive price due to our ability to bulk order.

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.

**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:
- school-based performances, productions and events; and
- school magazines, book club, class photographs.

**Voluntary financial contributions** are for those items and services that parents and guardians are invited to make a donation to the school. (e.g. first aid, library or computers.)

**Other support options**

No student will be treated differently, denied access or refused instruction to the standard curriculum program. 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, including the School Kids Bonus, the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) (2014 only) and State Schools Relief Committee support.

**Evaluation**

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

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This policy was last ratified by School Council on 16/09/13