RATIONAL

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 Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

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:

- **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);
- **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
- **voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be invited to donate to the school (e.g. for grounds beautification, additional computers, Building and Library Trusts).

GUIDELINES

Kalinda Primary School Council can request payments from parents for student materials and services charges and for voluntary financial contributions.

**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,
- materials for learning and teaching where your child consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (for example: all Art and Environmental Science materials);
- 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, incursions and excursions which all students are expected to attend (for example, transport and entrance costs).

**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
- 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, student accident insurance, and hire/lease of equipment such as musical instruments or notebook computers).

**Voluntary Contributions**

Kalinda Primary School will invite voluntary financial contributions for the following:

- contributions to ATO approved and tax deductible funds:
  - Library Development Fund
- contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school for services such as ground improvement and maintenance personnel
- general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

Parent details of contribution or non payment will be confidential

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

A range of support options are available, including:

- The **Education Maintenance Allowance** (EMA) (refer to EMA policy) is provided to low income families to assist with the cost of educating their children. One half of the EMA is paid directly to the parent by either cheque or direct deposit; the other half of the EMA is paid to the school.
- The **School Start Bonus** is to assist parents and guardians of Prep and Year 7 students in meeting the start-up costs of sending their child to school
- Access to **State Schools’ Relief Committee** support via the Director of Student Services which can assist with clothing/uniforms.
- Students will not be treated differentially or denied access to the standard curriculum program or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions
- Parents will be notified in writing of the Student Materials and Services Charges and Voluntary Financial Contributions with a clear description of each of the three payment categories
- All items will be accurately costed and details of how the payments and contributions will be spent by the school
- Receipts will be issued for all payments
- Parents will be asked where they wish to direct the school portion of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

This policy was ratified by School Council in March 2010