



HUME CENTRAL SECONDARY COLLEGE PARENT PAYMENT POLICY

Our College vision is to develop and encourage in our students a love of lifelong learning while equipping them with the skills, qualifications and personal attributes they need for a purposeful and fulfilling life beyond school.

PURPOSE

Hume Central Secondary College parent payment practices will be consistent, transparent and ensure that all children have access to learning programs at the College and are not excluded due to financial hardship.

SCOPE

In implementing this Policy the following principles will be adhered here:

- **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 support is provided where needed to ensure maximum access to learning for all students
- **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:** Parent/guardians and students experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement. The identity and personal information of all parents and students are kept confidential in respect to parent payments
- **Transparency and Accountability:** School parent/guardian payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school council.

RATIONALE

- Hume Central Secondary College Learning 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 circumstance
- To support **improved** learning outcomes and support the College in reaching its vision, goals and targets in all curriculum areas: English, Mathematics, the Arts, Health and Physical Education, Humanities, Science, and Technologies
- Be mindful of the diversity in the College Community. A measure of fairness will be maintained in implementing these guidelines at all times
- Promote College connectedness to, and involvement in, support of “education” as a strong family, community and society value

PARENT PAYMENT CHARGES

- School Council acknowledges the guidance provided in The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 in its considerations. The Act 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. Hume Central Secondary College only requests “essential”.
 - **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. 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.
- College Council will determine the levy structure in Term IV of each year for the following year
- Parent/guardians are fully responsible to ensure that their son/daughter has the required texts and stationery for their learning
- All requests for payment of excursions and camps are to be made by the due date and the appropriate permission slip signed and returned.

FURTHER FAMILY SUPPORT OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

It is acknowledged that at any time, any family can experience hardship from a range of life events. The College undertakes to be proactive in identifying any student that may be impacted and provide the required support.

Principals and School Councils, along with College Representative will always exercise sensitivity to the differing financial circumstances of students and their families when considering parent/guardian payment fees.

- Parent/guardians experiencing hardship who approach the College can expect to:
 - Be treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgment
 - Have their circumstances individually considered
 - Have their identity and circumstances kept confidential to the relevant school personnel



- Nominate a support person to accompany them to any meetings with parent payment contact persons
 - Receive prompt information on the support options available and government assistance programs
 - Discuss the amount they can afford and negotiate the terms of payment
 - Revisit their parent payment plan at any point during the school year
 - Receive free access to a language interpreter service if required
- Families/guardians having difficulties meeting financial obligations can make appointments with the Campus Principal of Student Welfare Co-ordinator on the relevant Campus to discuss options. This may include, (subject to confidential mandated discretion):- waiving levy, reducing levy, payment extensions, a more flexible payment plan
 - Parent/guardians who engage with the school are asked to acknowledge that both parents and the College want the best outcomes for all students. It is acknowledged that when this partnership develops, students have a better opportunity to do well. Informing relevant staff of hardship will assist the College to provide the best possible resources to support students to succeed at school. Parents/carers are encouraged to:
 - Advise the school of their financial difficulties as soon as practicable
 - Act reasonably in their negotiations with College staff in pursuit of a mutually acceptable outcome
 - Be honest and realistic in their assessment of their capacity to contribute to their child's education.
 - Advise the College if their circumstances change as soon as practicable
 - Maintain contact with the College as required
 - Through the College Newsletter, Website and communications, College families/guardians, will be made aware of the following :
 - Sustainable Schools for Hume Central Secondary College (online options for secondhand items)
 - CSEF
 - State Schools Relief
 - Local community supports, i.e. The Smith Family.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND METHODS AND COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

- School Council is pleased to be able to offer a number of payment options:
 1. Cash and EFTPOS at each Campus
 2. BPAY with relevant references found on the Statement
 3. Direct Debt from your Account – obtain a relevant form from the Campus Reception
 4. Centrepay from a Centrelink payment – obtain a relevant form from the Campus Reception
- Option to instigate a payment plan
- Communication of the annual levy structure through the College Parent Information Booklet
- Statements will be issued a minimum of twice yearly, posted to families.
- Statements can be emailed to Families on a more regular basis.
- No student will be discriminated against, on any basis, subject to non-payment of levies
- Confidentiality regarding the status of payment details
- Publication of Policy on the College Website
- Availability of Campus Principal to raise concerns.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES – 1:1 PERSONAL LEARNING DEVICES PROGRAM

Hume Central Secondary College is committed to a 1:1 Personal Learning Device Program. It is recognised that digital technologies are dramatically changing how we access information and this can enhance opportunities for learning enabling students to interact with, create high quality content, improve access to resources and are considered a powerful 24/7 learning tool. In providing this Program the impact can increased connectivity to College life, increase student aspirations and assist the College in reaching its goals and targets. The benefits to teaching and learning programs, where digital technologies are embedded could be but not limited to:

- Access to online resources, experts and learning communities
- Providing authentic, rich context for learning
- Personalising learning
- Connecting and collaborating to build new knowledge
- Developing contemporary skills
- Improving assessment, reporting and feedback
- Connecting families with the child's learning.

IMPLEMENTATION

- For this Program to be successful and embedded, all families are asked to participate. This will ensure consistency in the classroom and promote shared learning
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign an Agreement for this Program
 - The Agreement sets out:
 - Standards expected
 - Essential Payment structure
- All students will have access to all aspects of the Program and participation of all students will be facilitated.
- The College will enact that same sensitivity and responsiveness to hardship as previously outline.



RELATED POLICIES

- Finance Manual — Financial Management for Schools
- Financial Help for Families
- Personal Devices — Access
- School Council — Powers and Functions
- Student Dress Code
- Students with Disability

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required or due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date for Review	May 2021
Endorsed at College Council	June 2021