



School councils are able 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.

California Gully Primary School 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.

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 and will 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. home economics, ceramics, photography, catering);
- school uniform;
- transport and entrance for camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend.

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;
- school-based performances, productions and events; and
- school magazines, newsletters, class photographs.

Voluntary financial contributions are for those items and services that parents and guardians are **invited** to make a donation to the school, for example for grounds maintenance, a library or building trust.

Other support options

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 Start Bonus, the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and State Schools Relief Committee support.

Education Maintenance Allowance

A parent or guardian of a child under 16 years of age who holds an eligible Centrelink benefit and a Health Care Card or pension card, may be entitled to the Education Maintenance Allowance (\$235per primary student). The annual allowance amount is split evenly between the parents and the school.

The school's portion of the EMA will be put towards the cost of essential education items.

Parents are entitled to know how the EMA is being used for their child's education. The school will advise parents and guardians of the cost of student materials and services on which they propose to spend the EMA.

The school's portion of the EMA will not be used to offset voluntary financial contributions.

Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year will be returned to the parent/guardian unless there is agreement reached with the parent/guardian that this money can be carried over into the next year.

The school will manage the parent payment arrangements to coincide with the timing of the availability of Education Maintenance Allowance.

Payment arrangements

Parents and guardians will be provided with early notice of payment requests for essential education items & optional extras

Payments are kept to a minimum with payment requests and letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, four payment options have been developed:

- Option A Full amount
- Option B Payment at the beginning of terms 1,2 & 3 (3 instalments)
- Option C Half yearly payment (beginning of Terms 1 & 3)
- Option D CentrePay

Alternative payment options are available through the school with parents encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and available options.

Payments may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the year in which the materials and services are to be used.

Payment requests or letters to parents and the category each items falls under will be clearly identified as an essential education item, optional education item or voluntary financial contribution.

Receipts will be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

Reminders for unpaid essential education items or optional items will be generated and distributed on a regular basis to parents, but not more than once a month.

Only the initial invitation for voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice will be issued to parents and guardians (not applicable in 2012).

All records of payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents and guardians are kept confidential.

Date Reviewed	November 2011
Approved By	California Gully Primary School, School Council
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