

## PARENT PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Dear Parent

*Sale and District Specialist School* is looking forward to another great year of teaching and learning and would like to advise you of *Sale and District Specialist School's* parent payment arrangements for 2021.

*Sale and District Specialist School* makes every effort to keep the cost of items and activities to a minimum and affordable for all parents.

Please find the fee schedule for 2021 attached.

### Financial Support for Families

#### STATE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- **CSEF – Camps, Sport & Excursion Fund.** Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. \$125 per year is paid for eligible primary school students, with \$225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. A special consideration eligibility category also exists. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student
- **State Schools Relief** - State Schools' Relief only responds to requests from schools and not from parents. The school will then make a request to State Schools' Relief on your behalf. Talk to the student wellbeing worker, about the possibility of getting uniforms, shoes, books and stationery through the State Schools' Relief. Eligibility criteria required to be met

#### COMMONWEALTH FAMILY ASSISTANCE

*The Commonwealth Government provides a range of payments and services to help families look after their children's health, education and other family issues.*

- **Child Care Benefit** - helps eligible families with the cost of outside school hours care, vacation care and registered care. For more information about eligibility and making claims, see Centrelink
- **Family Tax Benefits A and B** -The Commonwealth Government provides a range of payments and services to help families look after their children's education, health care and other family issues
- **Disability Support Pension** - Students 16 + are on the Disability Support Pension and get a Pensioner Education Supplement to support their schooling costs
- **Health Care Card** - provides help with the with the cost of prescription medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Commonwealth-funded medical services, and access to state, territory and local government concessions. Families may be eligible for a Health Care Card if they receive specific Commonwealth payments or supplements or the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit A
- **Centrepay** - is a bill paying service, free for Centrelink customers, through which deductions can be made from a customer's payment directly to your Business. You can use Centrepay to pay bills and ongoing expenses like accommodation, education and employment, health, financial products, legal and professional services, utilities, travel and transport as well as other household costs.

## COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE - INFORMATION SERVICES

- **Crisis Referral Information System (CRIS) Online Directory** provides a broad range of information for people seeking welfare assistance, advice and general referral and support. The online directory contains comprehensive information on services and organisations such as those providing support in respect to accommodation, domestic violence, drug & alcohol treatment, health, material aid and mental health
- **Community Information and Support Victoria (CISVic)** is the peak body representing local community information and support services. Its member agencies assist people experiencing personal and financial difficulties by providing information, referral and support services including emergency relief
- **Emergency Relief (ER) Victoria** is the peak body for the Victorian emergency relief sector, with over 100 member organisations offering material aid and support to families experiencing a financial crisis or emergency
- **Financial Counselling Victoria (FCV)** is a non-profit organisation providing financial counselling through advocacy and information to disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community. FCV can provide advice over the phone, email or in person and can assist with referrals to other community and government support such as legal advice, material aid, and emergency relief

## COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- **School Breakfast clubs** - School Breakfast clubs run throughout Victoria either by the school community or in collaboration with a non-government organisation. While **Foodbank** has established the School Breakfast Clubs program for 250 of Victoria's most disadvantaged schools with Victorian Government support, other organisations such as the **Australian Red Cross** and **Ardoch Youth Foundation** also assist schools to source donations to run School Breakfast programs
- **Saver Plus** is an initiative of Brotherhood of St Laurence and ANZ, delivered locally by community organisations in 22 locations in Victoria. Saver Plus assists individuals and families on lower incomes to have every dollar up to \$500 saved over a 10-month period matched by ANZ to go towards education-related costs
- **The Smith Family's 'Learning for Life program** provides financial support, guidance and mentoring for disadvantaged students. The Smith Family works with a select number of schools and may require referral from the school principal
- **Travellers Aid Australia's Pathways to Education program** provides student travel passes to young people experiencing financial difficulties, enabling them to travel to school or other forms of training and education. The program is limited to students who attend secondary education in an alternative setting, namely community schools and secondary education at a tertiary institution
- **A Start in Life** is an Australian charity based in New South Wales that provides assistance to disadvantaged students from kindergarten through to tertiary studies
- **Good Shepherd Microfinance** provides affordable financial programs for people on low or limited incomes that may assist families to afford educational costs and other expenses. The **No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)** provides access to fair and safe credit (up to \$1,200) for the purchase of essential goods and services delivered through a network of local community organisations in 650 locations across Australia, including through Financial Counselling Victoria and Travellers Aid

## CONSIDERATION OF HARDSHIP

Hardship refers to an inability to pay due to financial difficulty or circumstance.

Hardship can arise from a variety of situations that can be either short or long term. Hardship is not necessarily related to the income of the family but can result from contributing stressors which can impact a family's ability to make financial payments.

Hardship can be experienced as a result of a sudden change in circumstances which leads to temporary financial difficulty; as a result of a low and/or fixed income which leads to ongoing financial difficulty; or from a combination of low income and an unanticipated change in circumstances.

While some families may require flexibility and temporary assistance, such as an extension of time to pay or flexible payment arrangements, other families may not expect their situation to improve in the foreseeable future and will instead require ongoing support over a longer period.

There are also a number of circumstances that can impact a family's ability to pay student fees. In either the short or long term, such circumstances can include, but are not limited to:

- Death of an immediate family member or friend
- Family breakdown or severe family disruption e.g. divorce/separation of parents; substance dependence and addiction
- Illness, including serious long term illness or mental illness of the parent or family member
- Family violence
- Homelessness, at risk of homelessness or impacted by transitional housing
- Out-of-home care arrangements or temporary foster parents
- Loss of employment
- Financial stress resulting in difficulty paying the bills, providing food or meeting essential costs, such as medical or transport costs
- Natural disaster such as drought, bushfire or flood
- Refugee status, including families on a Bridging Visa, Temporary Protection Visa, community detention and asylum seeker families
- Other factors resulting in unforeseen change in the parent's capacity to make payments, whether through a reduction in income or through an increase in non-discretionary expenditure

If you are experiencing hardship, either short term or long term, please contact any of the following staff to discuss your situation:

1. Jamie Gay – Acting Principal
2. Nicki Harris – Business Manager (Monday - Thursday)

Contact with any of the above staff can be any of the following:

1. Phone contact: 5144 5644
2. Email contact: School email is [sale.district.ss.@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:sale.district.ss.@education.vic.gov.au)
3. Arrange an appointment to discuss your situation.

## Payment Methods

### Payment Options

- Cost will be kept to a minimum with payment request/letters fair and reasonable. To further assist parents with payments, three payment options have been developed:  
Option A Full amount for the year at the beginning of the Term 1  
Option B Term payment at the beginning of each Term  
Option C Alternative payment arrangements
- Alternative payment options are available through the school, and parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the school to discuss circumstances and alternative options.
- CENTREPAY  
Centrepay is a voluntary bill-paying service which is free for Centrelink customers. Use Centrepay to arrange regular deductions from your Centrelink payment.  
You can start or change a deduction at any time. The quickest way to do it is through your Centrelink account online.  
Or, please contact the office for further information or to set up Centrepay deductions. 5144 5644
- Direct Deposit  
BSB 063 526 Account No. 0080 1519 Reference Child's Surname
- Bpay  
The details of Bpay are included on your statement with your unique reference code

## Refunds

Our school will consider requests for partial or full refunds of payments made by parents on a case by case basis taking into account the individual circumstances. Generally we will not be able to refund payments made for items purchased or costs that have already been paid where those funds have already been transferred to a third party. For example, camp costs when a child becomes unwell and cannot attend in circumstances where the payment has already been made or committed to a third party and no refund is available to the school.

For further information on the Department's Parent Payment Policy please see a one page overview attached.

Yours sincerely,

*Jamie Gay*  
Principal

*Jane Nash*  
School Council President

**ATTACHMENT: FEE SCHEDULE**

## FEE SCHEDULE – F-12

Please find the itemised list of Essential Student Learning Items and Optional Items for your child. *Sale and District Specialist School* also continues to welcome your voluntary contributions for 2021.

### Essential Student Learning Items

Below is a list of items and activities which are essential for your child to learn the standard curriculum. You may choose to purchase these items through the school or provide your own.

Essential Student Learning Items	Amount
Communication tools: PODD books, visuals & social stories	\$20
Consumables for Art includes; craft materials, paper, glue, glitter, cardboard etc	\$20
Consumables for Classrooms; pens, pencils, textas, exercise books, rulers, paper etc. These stay with the student for their schooling year	\$40
Incursion and excursion experiences (eg weekly library visits, park, visit to cafes)	\$80
Online learning subscriptions; Mathseeds	\$13
Reading Eggs	\$20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$193</b>

*We acknowledge that not all students' access every one of the Essential Student Learning Items listed above due to the special circumstance of each of our students. Therefore, we request that all students in years F-9 (Primary & Junior Secondary) pay \$100 for the 2021 year and all students in years 10-12 (Senior Secondary), who have a higher usage of consumables items and an increased number of excursions, to pay \$160 for the 2021 year. This allows all students to access the materials and items outlined in the Essential Student Learning Items category based on their need.*

### Optional Items

*Sale and District Specialist School* offers a range of optional items and activities that are additional to the delivery of the standard curriculum. These items and activities are designed to broaden the school experience for your child.

Optional Item	Amount
<i>Optional camps and excursions as scheduled throughout 2021. The cost of these excursions will be advised throughout the year.</i>	<i>To be advised</i>
<i>School Yearbook</i>	\$15
<i>School Photos</i>	<i>To be advised</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

### Voluntary Contributions

*Sale and District Specialist School* continues to welcome your voluntary contributions to support our school.

You can make a general voluntary contribution that goes towards all of our school's important priorities for 2021 as well as providing additional activities and services for all students. Alternatively, you can make a voluntary contribution to any of the specific priorities outlined in the table below:

Voluntary Contribution	Tax deductible ?	Suggested Voluntary Contribution per family			Amount
<i>General Contribution</i>	Yes	\$50	\$100	\$150	
<i>Building Fund – Construction of a Spa</i>	Yes	\$20	\$50	\$100	
<i>School council has established tax-deductible gift recipient status with the Australian Taxation Office for the Building Fund</i>					
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$</b>

Your child will not be disadvantaged if you do not make a voluntary contribution. All records of voluntary contributions are kept confidential as well as your decision about whether to make a contribution or not.

### Parent Payment Charges

Essential Student Learning Items Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Items Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Voluntary financial contribution Amount \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

# PARENT PAYMENTS POLICY

## ONE PAGE OVERVIEW

The following is a summary of the main principles of the Parent Payments Policy:



### FREE INSTRUCTION

- Schools provide students with free instruction to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements as outlined in the Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.



### PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTS

- Schools do not ask parents to pay for school operating costs (e.g. utility costs) or general and unspecified charges.
- Schools request payments from parents under three categories:

Essential Student Learning Items	Optional Items	Voluntary Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Items and activities which the school deems essential for student learning.</li> <li>○ Parents may choose to purchase essential items through the school or provide their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are offered in addition to the standard curriculum.</li> <li>○ These are provided to students on a user-pays basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Voluntary contributions support the school to continue to be the best local school for all students and can be for general or specific purpose.</li> <li>○ Students will not be disadvantaged in any way if parents do not make a contribution.</li> </ul>



### FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES

- Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn't miss out.
- Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.



### SCHOOL PROCESSES

- Schools obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and upload their arrangements on their school's public website for transparency.