



**Templestowe Heights**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

The Department of Education and Training has introduced a new policy regarding school fees. This new policy relates to all schools and is effective from 2017.

It is important to note that the changes in the fee structure do not change the amount of overall fees you are required to pay. In fact, ***the overall fees have not been increased since 2013 and will not increase in 2017.***

The purpose of the policy is to simplify the distinction between essential, optional and voluntary financial contributions as well as introduce payment option plans for families.

### **Essential, Optional and Voluntary Fees**

There has been some confusion around the types of school fees and what is considered essential, optional and voluntary. For example, in previous years, some fees appeared under essential and some appeared under optional.

Currently, families are provided with an invoice for school fees at the start of each year. This invoice includes curriculum materials, essential and voluntary fee details. An additional invoice for excursion/incursion (for example, a visit to the museum) and optional fees (for example, a camp) is provided at the start of each term, and for a lot of parents these fees are a surprise extra cost.

Now, families will be provided an invoice for next years' school fees on 1 December. This invoice will include essential, excursion/incursion and voluntary fee details for the ***whole*** year. An additional invoice for optional fees (for example, a camp) will be provided to families before the event.

We have changed our payment options so fees can be managed upfront or pay-by-the-month.

### **New Fee Payment Options**

Under the new policy you will have the option to pay fees upfront or on a monthly basis, making it easier for families to budget for school fees.

Attached to this letter are some **frequently asked questions (FAQs)** that may answer some of your queries around the new fees structure.



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The new structure for school fees in 2017 is:

**1. Essential fees include:**

- Textbooks (i.e. take home reader books) and subscriptions (i.e. Mathletics, Reading Eggs, Digital Excellence)
- Stationery items, such as glue sticks, pencils, pens, exercise books, photocopy paper and facial tissues.
- Materials and resources that support our curriculum programs (i.e. iPads, laptops, robotics, science equipment, musical instruments, PE equipment, Italian resources, dictionaries, measuring equipment)
- Resources that support other whole-school programs including our School Ball, School Production, Art Show
- Excursions, whole-school sporting days (such as athletics day)
- Incursions (such as our annual artist in residence, visiting authors and Life Education)

**2. Optional fees include:**

- Swimming program
- Camps
- Class photos
- Private music lessons
- Interschool sports
- Year 6 graduation
- Tickets for the School Production and School Ball

**3. Voluntary fees include:**

- A tax deductible donation to our Buildings and Grounds fund to help us create and maintain a stimulating environment for our students. The donations go a long way to keeping our playgrounds beautiful, topping up playground soft fall, constructing garden beds, installing outdoor seating and purchasing shade sails and the upkeep of our community garden and chicken coop.
- A tax deductible donation to our Library fund to help purchase current and popular library books for our students to read and borrow during their weekly library sessions, before school, at playtime or lunchtime.

If you have any further questions about the new fees please contact either myself or our Business Manager, Margaret de Haas, on telephone 9850 1796.

Sincerely,

Rhys Coulson



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## FAQs

### ***Why is the policy changing?***

The Department of Education and Training has introduced a new policy that is required to be implemented by all Victorian state schools.

### ***Am I paying more?***

No, the total amount of the essential fees remain exactly the same as the past four years (since 2013).

### ***Have some fees now become essential when they were previously optional?***

Yes, under the new policy, many items that were considered optional fees have now become essential because they are considered to be items, activities or services that are essential to student learning of the standard curriculum.

### ***How do I pay?***

You will receive your school fee invoice on 1 December. This invoice will show the school fees for the following year.

1. Upfront payment option
  - You can pay your yearly school fees in one payment. Payment is due by 28 February in any given year. Payment can be made via BPAY, EFTPOS, cash or cheque.
2. Pay-by-the-month option
  - You can pay your yearly school fee by setting-up a pay-by-the-month option via BPAY, EFTPOS, cash or cheque.
  - Just divide your yearly payment by 8 to calculate the amount of each instalment.
  - Payments must be made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each February, March, April, May, June, July, August and September.
3. Other payment option
  - Please talk with our Business Manager, Margaret de Haas to discuss other payment options. Margaret's telephone number is 9850 1796.



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***Do I pay the optional fees (such as for swimming and camps) with the other fees?***

No, any optional fee, such as for swimming or a camp, will be communicated to families when the event is planned. Families will then receive an invoice for these optional events.

***What if I can't pay the school fees?***

We understand that families can sometimes experience financial difficulty or a crisis which makes payment difficult.

Please feel free to talk with Rhys Coulson (Principal) or Margaret de Haas (Business Manager) regarding payment options. You can phone us on 9850 1796.

Information on Financial Assistance for Families is available on the Department of Education and Training website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/families.aspx#link31>

***Is there a discount for families with more than one child?***

No, the amount for the essential items contribution has considered this and has been calculated to ensure that any family, whether they have one or more child at the school, will not be paying more than previously.

***Does this change my payment for the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)?***

No.

More information on the CSEF is available here on the Department of Education and Training website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx?Redirect=1>

***I need help!***

Please feel free to talk with our Business Manager Margaret de Haas with any queries. Margaret's telephone number is 9850 1796.

The school office will be open on 25 January, 2017 to assist with any school fee payment queries.