1. **RATIONALE**

   *The Education & Training Reform Act 2006* empowers School Councils to charge parents for goods and services to support the delivery of the free instruction of their children, as well as to raise funds.

As the quality and variety of educational programs offered by our school are enhanced by doing so, our School Council requests payment from parents for certain student materials and services charges, and for modest voluntary financial contributions.

This policy is to support the process for collection of parent payments to facilitate quality learning for students.

2. **AIMS**

   To provide a diverse range of high quality learning opportunities for all students, by supplementing limited government funds with approved financial contributions and payments from parents.

   To ensure fair and equitable resources for use within the school and to create a clear and precise process working in partnership with parents/guardians to support the best learning environment for students.

   To ensure that the fees and contributions are managed effectively at a school level in compliance with relevant Department of Education and Early Childhood Development requirements and guidelines.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION**

   After considering the expectations of our school community, the School Council of Rosehill Secondary College will continue to ensure that:

   - Fees and contributions are kept to a minimum and are subject to the ‘free instruction’ provision to ensure charges will not exceed the cost of providing the relevant materials or services to our students.

   - All students have access to the standard curriculum program.

   - Students will not be treated differently, 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.

   - Enrolment or advancement to the next year level will not be withheld as a condition of payment of essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions.

   - Subject fees will only be requested to cover the cost of the provision of materials to be used personally by the student, where the student consumes or takes possession of the finalized articles, for text hire or produced material in lieu of purchase of text books, for high costs alternative subjects and various school based performances, events, camps and excursions.

   - Parents/guardians will be provided with reasonable notice of requests for payment of material charges and voluntary contributions under the headings of essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

   - A minimum of six (6) weeks’ notice will be given to allow parents/guardians sufficient planning time to meet financial commitments. Payment may be requested but not required prior to the commencement of the school year in which the materials and services are to be used.

   - 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:
     
     i. Full amount
     ii. Payment at the beginning of the first three terms
     iii. Half yearly payment (beginning of terms 1 & 3)
     iv. Other, payment arrangements
• The status and details of any payments or contributions and any outstanding payments by parents/guardians will remain confidential.

• Students wishing to participate in extra curricula activities such as camps, excursions, trips, dinners, debutante ball, etc must meet the full cost of the activity and be up to date with all payments, including compulsory charges before the student participates.

• School Council will provide opportunities for parents/guardians who have difficulty paying for essential items and who can access a range of support options which will include:
  - The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for holders of an eligible health care card
  - The School Start Bonus for Year 7 students
  - State Schools Relief Committee
  - Confidential staged progress payments/payment plans through contact with the Business Manager.

• Payment arrangements will coincide with the availability of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) support for eligible parents/guardians and parents within the relevant guidelines.

• Parents in receipt of EMA will not be requested to sign over their portion of the EMA but will however be requested to support the College by allowing the College to put the school’s portion of the EMA towards the Essential Educational Items listed on the Parent Payments and Voluntary Financial Contributions Lists.

• Parents are not required to sign over their EMA cheque but may take up this option to offset against their fees.

• Any portion of the EMA not expended by the end of the year will be returned to parent.

• Parents will be informed of the second-hand book sales and encouraged to use this service.

• Invoices for unpaid essential education items or optional items accepted by parents are generated and distributed on a regular basis, but not more than once a month.

• Only the initial invitation of voluntary financial contributions and one reminder notice is sent to parents/guardians.

• No collectors of any type, including debt collectors will be used by the school to obtain any funds from parents/guardians.

• Unpaid voluntary charges will be written off at the parent’s written request or when the charge is outstanding at the end of the year.

• The Parent Payment Policy will be communicated within the school and all staff will be familiar with the policy guidelines.

4. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle. School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually and in doing so will be consistent with any advice or instruction received from the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development.

REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS:

• Memorandum No S300-2008 Parent Payments
• Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools 2008

This policy was ratified by School Council on 31st March 2014