



WINMALEE HIGH SCHOOL

Fees and School Contributions

PREAMBLE

Financial support provided by parents has always played an enabling role in the provision of resources that extend the school's capacity to add value to students' learning experience.

Estimates of the level of the total payments that will be received from parents form an important element in schools' annual financial plans. Decisions about the level of financial support requested of parents require the approval of the School Finance Team which has an important role in the school's financial planning arrangements to meet the needs of students. Items made by students during any part of the educational program for which the parents have contributed or been charged become the property of the student.

SUBJECT SELECTION

For students currently enrolled at the school, principals will at the time of subject selection, clearly communicate to parents and carers in writing the amount of the general contribution sought and fees payable for courses in the form of a summary sheet at the time of course subject selection. This will allow parents and carers to view the total costs they will be committing to, based on their child's subject choices. Elective courses in particular need to be considered carefully.

Parents and carers will be provided with notification of the schedule of requested contributions and charges or will be provided their own itemised statements of requested contributions and course charges where possible, no later than two months into the school year. This statement will show the voluntary nature of contributions; clearly identify the charges for extra cost or optional components; and show charges applicable to Year 11 and 12 courses.

Parents and carers may be notified through a variety of communications including:

- school newsletter;
- student handbook provided on enrolment;
- subject selection handbook;
- postal letter of Fees Statement;
- school facebook site;
- school website.

RELIEF FROM FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The school is sensitive to the fact that a family's situation may be such that they cannot afford to pay school fees or contributions or that their circumstance can change suddenly creating financial hardship. In such cases, parents and carers are asked to notify the principal that they are experiencing financial hardship. It is preferred that this request be made in writing. Alternatively, it may occur in conversation with the Principal or one of their delegates over the phone or may occur during a meeting with the school.

Payment options include payment by instalments (payment plan), deferred payment and in some cases discounts. Payment by instalments may occur using the *Payment Plan Form* signed by both the parent/carer and the school Principal. The signed form is kept on the student file and a copy is kept by the Senior Administration Manager for tracking of payment purposes. In some cases, the Principal may elect to waive fees and contributions.

The school may offer support in the form of financial assistance to parent and carers experiencing financial hardship. This can occur through the student equity funding. A *Student Assistance Form* will need to be completed and signed by the parent/carer and approved by the principal. Every effort will be made to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the student and the family's situation.

VOLUNTARY AND OR GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS

A voluntary payment requested from parents towards the cost of materials, services and facilities used by Year 7-12 students in the educational program and for co-curricular activities.

Each year the Principal will determine the level of general contribution for the next school year with the maximum amount not increasing by more than 5% from the last financial year. Discounts may apply for families with more than one child. These are clearly identified in the fees and contributions listed each year. This amount will not be changed after parents and carers have been notified. If a change is deemed necessary, parents will be informed in writing either through a letter, or published in the school newsletter, social media or the school website.

Students are permitted to participate in a specific educational activity regardless of whether a contribution has been received. Students whose parents have not paid the contribution will not be treated differently from students whose parents have paid their general contributions.

COURSE FEES AND ELECTIVE FEES

It is sometimes necessary to charge fees for components of a course which are not elective courses e.g. food or other materials. As part of general course information, teachers will inform students within their courses of the related course costs. Course fees are not mandatory but asked for to assist with the delivery of a quality program. Students and their parents when choosing elective courses are asked to consider the cost of courses carefully during the selection process.

The school acknowledges that the responsibility for payment of course fees and elective fees lies with the parents or carers. Parents are to be informed in writing of the course costs at the start of the course. This may be handed to the student within a class, requesting that they take the notification home to their parents and carers. Students whose parents have negotiated and signed a payment plan or received student equity funding approval will not be excluded from regular class activities.

If no payment is received for a course with fees, students need to be provided with the opportunity to pay. Students may participate without payment and should have access to fundamental materials to demonstrate outcomes. In some cases students may not be permitted to eat the items cooked or take home finished products e.g. wood or metal work. In other cases, students who have not paid fees for a course may not be permitted to participate in other additional activities or excursions organised by a class teacher that have a fee or charge attached and which are done as a bonus opportunity for students in a particular course.

Payment is expected from an overseas or an adult student unless visa conditions state otherwise. Students receiving a Youth Allowance through Centrelink are required to fund their education costs using the allowance monies. Regular participation and attendance are requirements of continued payment of the Youth Allowance.

Sufficient time must be provided to allow the payment of course fees and elective fees or a request can be made for a Payment Plan and a form signed stating the agreed Payment Plan. Again, it is preferred that this is in writing to parents and carers.

NON-MANDATORY OR OPTIONAL SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES

To be eligible for non-mandatory or optional school-based activities such as social events, ski trips, sailing trips or end-of-term excursions students must be fully financial or parents and carers have signed a Payment Plan and be meeting schedule specified in the payment plan.

REFUNDING MONIES FOR SUBJECT FEES OR CONTRIBUTIONS

Refunds of money will be handled with care and sensitivity. As much as possible, the school will communicate the refund policy upfront to the parents to avoid any misunderstanding, particularly with respect to the course costs or extra costs. This applies mostly in subject where a kit, book or package is required. These may be taken with the student when they sign out from the school.

When a student leaves Winmalee High School after the commencement of the school year (for example, to move interstate or to another school), there may be a need to refund unspent contributions, course fees or other monies to the parents. These arrangements will be negotiated with the Principal.

When a student enrolls at another school after the commencement of the school year, principals will refund the unused portion of contributions or fees received from the parents/carers. This means students are charged on a pro rata basis. For example, if the child attended for one term, the parents/carers will be asked to pay for one quarter of the course fees and asked to pay for one quarter of the General contribution if they feel so inclined.