Policy Statement

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 ensures the provision of free instruction in the standard curriculum program, and empowers school councils to charge for goods and services used in the course of instruction and to raise funds.

The standard curriculum program includes the core learning and teaching activities associated with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and senior secondary certificates such as the VCE.

School Councils are responsible for developing a school-level policy which covers essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.

These payments fall into three categories:

1. **essential education items** which parents and guardians are required to provide or pay the College to provide for their child (e.g. stationery, ID Cards, text books and school uniforms where required, and all electives as outlined in the curriculum handbooks)

2. **optional extras** which are offered on a user-pays basis and which parents and guardians may choose whether their child accesses or participates in (e.g. school magazines or extra curricular programs or activities)

3. **voluntary financial contributions** which parents and guardians may be invited to donate to the College (e.g. grounds beautification, additional computers, Building and Library Trusts).

Guidelines

Rowville Secondary College Council can request payments from parents for student materials and services charges and for voluntary financial contributions.

**Essential Education Items**

Parents/Guardians can be asked to pay for essential education items. These include:

- items which students take possession of, including text books and student stationery, ID Cards
- materials for learning and teaching where your child consumes or takes possession of the finished articles (eg all electives as outlined in the curriculum handbooks)
- school uniform
- travel costs incurred in the course of receiving the instruction from a teacher or other person
- essential services associated with, but not considered to be part of 'instruction in the standard curriculum program', such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (eg transport, entrance costs)
Optional Extras

Optional extras are those that are provided in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are to be provided on a user-pays basis and if parents/guardians choose to access them for their child they will be required to pay for them.

These items include:

- instructional support, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program
- extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’ (eg music tuition)
- school run performances, productions and events
- materials for subjects where the payment sought is the difference between the basic materials or services required for the standard curriculum program and higher cost alternatives which may be more desirable
- materials and services offered in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’ (eg school magazine, school photographs)
- school facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the ‘standard curriculum program’ and not otherwise provided for through the School Resources Package (eg hire/lease of equipment such as musical instruments)

Voluntary Contributions

Rowville Secondary College will invite voluntary financial contributions for the following:

- Contributions to ATO approved and tax deductible funds:
  - Building Trust Fund
  - Library Trust Fund
- Contributions for a specific purpose identified by the College for services such as ground improvement, computers
- General voluntary financial contributions or donations to the College

Parent details of contribution or non payment will be confidential.

The Principal and School Council have the responsibility of making sure that no student is disadvantaged if parents/guardians are unable to pay the voluntary contribution.

A range of support options are available including:

- The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided to low income families to assist with the cost of educating their children. One half of the EMA is paid directly to the parent by direct deposit, the other half of the EMA is paid to the College. Parents will be asked where they wish to direct the school portion of the Education Maintenance Allowance.
- The School Start Bonus is to assist parents/guardians of Year 7 students in meeting the start-up costs of sending their child to school.
- Access to State Schools’ Relief Committee support via the Campus Welfare Co-ordinator which can assist with clothing/uniforms.
- Access to student welfare support within the College provides further assistance to students and their families. The Campus Welfare Co-ordinator should be contacted to arrange a suitable appointment time.

Students will not be treated differently or denied access to the ‘standard curriculum program’ on the basis of payments not being made for education items, services or voluntary financial contributions.
Parents will be notified in writing of the Student Materials and Services charges and Voluntary Financial Contributions with a clear description of each of the three payment categories.

All items will be accurately costed and details of how the payments and contributions will be spent by the College.

Receipts will be issued for all payments.

THIS POLICY WAS RATIFIED BY COLLEGE COUNCIL ON: 8 June 2011

GLENN FANKHAUSER      DEBRA DWYER
PRINCIPAL            COLLEGE COUNCIL PRESIDENT