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## **Public schools are not fully funded by the government**

**November 2019**

### **A letter from parent representatives on School Council**

A regular discussion item at School Council meetings is the payment, or non-payment of annual college charges by families.

We understand that this is an expensive time of year and we would like to acknowledge and thank those families who pay their compulsory Essential Student Learning Items fees and who decide to contribute to the College Council Items, in any capacity. Those of you who are making payments on a regular basis through a payment plan, or have approached the college for assistance due to hardship are also acknowledged.

Whilst 'free education' may possibly have been available in the distant past, it certainly is no longer the case, and we would like to explain why.

The annual operating expenses for running MESC total close to 2.2 million dollars and include;

- classroom and program budgets
- services not funded by the government such as First Aid and Wellbeing Support
- cleaning costs beyond the funded amount
- maintenance and grounds management.

This **does not** include staff wages. The Victorian Government contributes most of the cost of wages **but** less than half of the operating costs mentioned above. The shortfall must be found by the school.

### **Essential Student Learning Item Levies**

These are compulsory levies for items, activities or services that the school deems as essential to student learning in the standard curriculum.

For students in years 9-12 we place a deadline on payment for elective subjects as it is necessary for us to confirm numbers in each of the electives in order that we can allocate teaching staff appropriately. This staffing is in place from the commencement of Jumpstart and we encourage parents to contact the college if personal circumstances are difficult, in order that students are ensured a place in their chosen programs.

### **College Council Items**

These College Council requested levies are critical to providing us with the money to employ a maintenance person, provide first aid assistance, employ a Student Wellbeing Coordinator, maintain the grounds, develop Banksia Hall for performances, update old furniture, paint the college, purchase lockers, replace carpet and update learning spaces to improve their suitability for students, amongst many other things. Whilst these levies are optional we strongly encourage families to consider support for the services outlined which are provided for all students.

### **Voluntary contributions**

These contributions allow us to put funds aside for longer term projects such as new signage, outdoor equipment, drinking stations and building works outside of the scope of annual expenditure. We are extremely appreciative of families who choose to provide support in this way.

The Essential Student Learning Item levies, College Council Items levies and Voluntary Contributions are **the only means** we have to meet the annual operating expenses. If we do not receive sufficient funds to pay for all these costs through parent support, then put simply, our students miss out and those who do pay are subsidising those who don't.

We work very hard to minimise the costs for families, and will always arrange payment plans or other options to support families to contribute.

We hope this clarifies both government expectations and the need for the support we request, and creates a better level of understanding for all members of our community.

More importantly, we hope the majority of families who are contributing, are assured and satisfied that they are providing both a valuable education and a quality environment for their child, six and a half hours a day, five days a week.

We welcome feedback so please feel free to contact our Business Manager Brenda Barker, if you would like further clarification or more information about your school's funding. The DET Frequently Asked Questions information regarding parent payments can be found on our website.

Regards

Lisa Massey [College Council president], Andrew Gill, Greg Cunnington, Nick Moses, Lisa Ingerton, Georgina Blennerhassett, Melissa Goulis, Stephen Baker, Linda Rickard and Donna Bragg

Parent representatives of Mount Eliza Secondary College Council.