

PARENT PAYMENTS - PERSONAL DEVICES & ACCESS



RATIONALE

- Digital technologies are dramatically changing how we educate our students. Increased access to electronic devices such as laptop computers or tablets (hereafter ‘devices’) and the explosion of online information enables our students to interact with, and create high quality content, resources and tools. Through increased access to devices, students can leverage learning that is interactive, differentiated and collaborative. The precise application of technology and quality instruction can enhance learning. The increased connectivity between school life, private life and social life coupled with portable devices and high speed broadband open up the possibility for new models of instruction outside of the traditional classroom setting.
- Schools play an important role in introducing technology to children and ensuring it is used appropriately to enable efficient and effective learning and teaching practices and prepare students for life and work and many schools are choosing to implement a 1-to-1 learning program. A 1-to-1 learning program is a program where each student will have access to a device to complete learning tasks. However, the Department of Education and Training (the Department) does not stipulate that a school must have a 1-to-1 learning program, nor does it mandate a preferred provisioning model.
- It is important that 1-to-1 learning programs are guided by a clear rationale of the positive impact that access to a device will have on learning and teaching. The rationale should provide guidance, serve as the foundation of decisions and inform the program direction. Learning must drive the goals; access to devices can provide an effective means of achieving those goals. Planning, implementing and sustaining a program to provide personal access presents both challenges and opportunities. Schools need to ensure their practices align with policy. Engagement and communication with the School Council and community is essential to implement a successful and equitable 1-to-1 program, providing personal access to devices.
- Schools will determine whether to implement a 1-to-1 model based on the teaching and learning needs of their community.
- 1-to-1 learning models may include:
 - school purchased personal devices – owned or leased by the school and provided to students at no cost to families
 - co-contribution – parents partner with the school to contribute to the purchase or lease of a device
 - Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) where students bring in their own device either purchased or leased directly by families. This may include:
 - any device
 - any device, but with set features, e.g. software/applications as defined by the school
 - a specified device as defined by the school. This may also be from a preferred supplier, negotiated by the school that may also provide parents with a better/more flexible financial deal for their direct purchase of a device.

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- Schools can request payments from parents under three categories: Essential Student Learning Items, Optional Items or Voluntary Financial contributions. Each school determines whether an item, activity or service is an Essential Student Learning Item or an Optional Item within the context of their distinct learning and teaching program.
- Personal devices can fall under either category as follows:
 - Essential Student Learning Items – items and services that the school deems essential to student learning of the standard curriculum. Where a school determines that personal devices are an essential student learning item, they must put in place processes and practices that align with the six principles of the Parent Payments Policy.
 - Optional Items - these are items or services that the school deems are optional and offered in addition to the standard curriculum. Students access these on a user pays basis.
- For more information on how schools determine their 1-to-1 learning model, see: 1-to-1 Learning.

PURPOSE

- To ensure Charles La Trobe College provides students with equitable access to electronic devices such as laptop computers or tablets when they implement 1-to-1 learning programs and seek financial contributions from parents consistent with the *Parent Payments Policy*.
- To ensure the College complies with DET policy and guidelines in relation to charges for personal devices.
- To ensure the College is aware of those aspects of school management that the DET specifically draws to the attention of schools.

IMPLEMENTATION

- If applicable, the school will ensure policy and practice is compliant with DET guidelines and aligns with the following principles of the Parent Payments Policy:
 - Student learning, aspirations and wellbeing are paramount in determining parent payment practices.
 - The value of providing personal access to a device to support students' learning needs to be established and communicated. Devices alone do not improve learning; their use needs to be integrated into a quality teaching and learning program.
 - The benefits to teaching and learning programs, where digital technologies are embedded need to be established and communicated. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - access to online resources, experts and learning communities
 - providing authentic, rich contexts for learning
 - personalising learning
 - connecting and collaborating to build new knowledge
 - developing contemporary skills

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- improving assessment, reporting and feedback
- connecting families with their child's learning
- All students will have access to all aspects of the program and participation of all students is facilitated.
- Costs will be kept to a minimum. The 1-to-1 program must be affordable for the College's parent community as determined through consultation with the community.
- The College will make every endeavour to offset device costs and demonstrate savings to parents/carers by, for example, reducing the requirement to purchase certain text books.
- If the College is providing the device for lease, parents/carers must only be asked to contribute to the purchase price to the school for the device, insurance costs and software purchased locally for the device
- The College will have an equity plan in place to ensure all students have access to the same learning outcomes.
- The equity plan must include the following elements:
 - Where payment plans are offered to support participation, they must be reasonable and affordable for the majority of parents/families
 - Where parents/carers/families:
 - are concession card holders and the Principal considers they are experiencing financial hardship and cannot reasonably participate in a payment plan, the College will provide students access to a device with the required capabilities to complete planned learning tasks
 - are not concession card holders but who the Principal considers are experiencing financial hardship (short or long term) and as a result cannot reasonably participate in a payment plan, the College will provide students access to a device with the required capabilities to complete planned learning tasks
 - decline to participate in a 1-to-1 program on grounds other than financial hardship, the College will provide students access to a device with the required capabilities to complete planned learning tasks.
- The College will not require parents/carers to pay for any software provided by DET, technical support provided by DET, internet use funded centrally by DET and/or wireless access.
- Within budget limitations, the College will provide some technical advice to ensure all students have access to the eduSTAR network.
- Where possible, the College will try to accommodate parents/carers who request children bring an existing device instead of the one specified by the program. These devices need to meet the minimum technical specifications set out by the school to ensure they can be effectively used for learning.
- For further information, including current DET references, the College will refer to the website below.

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- Details of the College’s Responding to Parental Hardship Strategies are contained in the College’s pre-requisite Parents Payments Policy.
- The school will engage the parent community in any discussions relating to personal devices and will ensure payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent.
- Please refer also to the Complaints, Parents Policy, the Using Digital Technology to Support Learning Policy, Support for Families Experiencing Hardship Policy and the Governance & Management Policy.

EVALUATION

- As part of the Department’s and each school’s commitment to ongoing improvement, and ensuring that the impact of policies and practices on students are assessed in an ongoing way, implementation of the Personal Devices – Parent Payment and Access Policy and school practice will be reviewed as follows:
 - The School Council has a key role in ensuring the school level device provision model reflects the shared expectations of the whole school community and is therefore responsible for monitoring its effectiveness and impact on parents and students.
 - The Principal will lead the review of parent payments for personal devices including parent satisfaction of the program.
 - The Department will undertake audits for compliance with this policy.
 - The implementation of the policy will be reviewed as part of the school review process.
 - Parent complaints about the application of this policy can be resolved through the existing complaints procedure.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update Oct 2018).

RATIFICATION

The first update was ratified by College Council on 15th February, 2018.
This update was ratified on August 15th 2019.

REFERENCE

www.education.vic.gov.au/education/principals/spag/management/Pages/personaldev.aspx