



Personal Devices – Parent Payment & Access Policy (Including College Specific Procedures)

Latest DET Update: May 2018
First Developed in this Format: October 2019

Purpose |

- To ensure Bayside P-12 College provides students with equitable access to electronic devices such as laptops when they implement 1-to-1 learning 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.

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 PC 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.
- 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.

Parent Payment Categories

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Policy requirements|

Schools need to put in place processes and practices that align with the following six principles of the Parent Payments Policy:

- **Educational value**

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.



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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
- improving assessment, reporting and feedback
- connecting families with their child's learning.

- **Access, equity and inclusion**

All students have access to all aspects of the program and participation of all students is facilitated.

- **Equity Plan**

Where School Councils decide to implement a 1-to-1 program requiring parent payments a school must 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:

- payment plans are offered to support participation, they must be reasonable and affordable for the majority of parents/families; where parents/families:
 - are concession card holders* and the principal considers they are experiencing financial hardship and cannot reasonably participate in a payment plan, schools must 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, schools must 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, schools should provide students access to a device with the required capabilities to complete planned learning tasks.

*Be an eligible beneficiary within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004, that is, be the holder of a Veterans Affairs Gold Card or be an eligible Centrelink Health Care Card (HCC) or Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) holder. See also ["Supporting families experiencing hardship – Questions and Answers"](#) of the Parents Payments Policy for further circumstances to be considered relating to financial hardship.

- **Items schools cannot charge for-**
 - Schools must not require parents to pay for the following items as they are either centrally funded by the Department or are considered to be part of free instruction:
 - any software provided by the Department
 - any technical support funded by the Department
 - internet use required for the standard curriculum program or any internet service funded centrally by the Department
 - wireless network access.
 - Technical support - While it is recognised the amount of technical support that can be provided by the school is limited, schools should provide some technical advice, through their Specialist Technician to ensure all students have access to the school eduSTAR wireless network.



Although it will not always be practical or possible to connect a device that is not the one specified by the school, wherever possible schools should try to accommodate parents who request their children bring an existing device instead of one specified by the program. These devices need to meet the minimum technical specifications set out by the school to ensure that they can be effectively used for learning.

Where a student brings their own device that is not specified by the school it may not be possible to install required software for licensing or software reasons and parents will need to be advised to organise their own purchase of the software.

Schools should provide some technology advice, in consultation with their Specialist Technician regarding the suitability of devices to meet the school's teaching and learning and technical requirements. Parents should be advised that the amount of technical support for personal devices that can be provided by the school is limited.

- **Affordability**

Costs to parents are kept to a minimum

- The BYO program must be affordable for the school's parent community, as determined through consultation with the school community
- Where possible schools should attempt to offset device costs and demonstrate savings to parents associated with introducing the devices e.g. parents may no longer be required to purchase certain textbooks, dictionaries or the school provides other items at no cost to the parent.

- **Engagement and support**

Early identification, communication and engagement strategies implemented by the school ensure parents are well informed of the payment options and supports available for those experiencing hardship.

As part of the school's communication with parents about their teaching and learning programs, the value of access to a device can be discussed.

Where schools wish to introduce programs where parents pay for personal devices they should engage the parent community in the discussion.

The discussion should provide advice on the BYO program learning and its proposed purchase/lease model including:

- the educational benefits
- the rationale and guidelines for the preferred device/s. Note: The school may select a particular device based on technical and software considerations
- the proposed costs and any options of the program
- demonstrated potential savings such as offsetting costs of textbooks
- details of proposed maintenance and insurance agreements
- the minimum technical specifications required for devices
- providing opportunities for viewpoints of parents to be expressed
- seeking out and considering the views of different groups of parents (such as parents of children with special needs, or parents who may have difficulty paying for the device)
- addressing concerns raised by parents before finalising the decision-making process being documented, including recording concerns raised by parents.

Schools must have support options available for parents who may have difficulties paying for the devices. (Support options include financial and other supports - see: Cost support for families).



- **Respectful and confidential**

Parents experiencing hardship are treated with respect, dignity, sensitivity and without judgement and the identity and personal information of all parents are kept confidential in respect to parent payments.

Parents experiencing hardship are not pursued for outstanding debts from one year to the next. The use of collectors of any type, including debt collectors, to obtain any outstanding funds owed to the school from parents is not permitted. Schools must be aware of the debt collection policy of third party providers engaged to sell or lease devices to schools.

The status and details of any financial arrangements are kept confidential. The identification of students or their parents who have or have not made a payment or financial contribution is unacceptable and must not occur in any circumstance. No child should ever be involved in any conversation about funding.

- Responding to financial hardship:
 - Schools have a commitment and responsibility to be responsive to parents who may be experiencing either short term or long term hardship and are unable to make the requested payments for personal devices. This includes offering options, which support and assist those parents such as school-purchased devices on loan or leasing arrangements with reasonable and affordable payment plans.
 - Consideration of hardship arrangements and concessions are provided to families on a confidential, case-by-case basis. Consideration must be given to the impact on the student and any determination must ensure that outcomes for the student are kept at the forefront of decision-making. This approach provides for an individualized, family-centred and student outcomes focus that necessarily requires thoughtful consideration of each situation.
 - Each school has an equity plan with documentation for hardship consideration, which is communicated to parents with clarity and timeliness.
 - Each school also has a nominated Parent Payments contact person who is able to use their discretion within the mandate of the policy and guiding principles to agree on appropriate forms of support and assistance.

- **Transparency and accountability**

School parent payment practices are well communicated, clear and transparent, and their impact on student programs and families are reviewed by school councils.

- Schools must:
 - not mandate that a parent purchase or lease a device based on the adopted program; advise parents that while the school has a preferred model, they can choose whether or not to purchase/lease the device
 - provide parents with sufficient notice of the program's introduction
 - make new parents aware of any programs that are in place, including where consultation has been completed prior to their need to purchase/lease a device.

School councils must approve the school's device provision model when parent payments are required including BYOD or co-contribution. Advice is available to support schools to review their personal device programs including the teaching and learning rationale, classroom practice, parent engagement and communication strategies and student and parent satisfaction with the program.



College Specific Procedures |

Bayside P-12 College Council will:

- make every effort to keep costs to a minimum and ensure Personal Devices - Parent Payment Policy is fair and equitable
- provide parents/carers with as much notice as possible regarding personal device requirements
- provide parents/carers with a number of payment options and support families facing financial difficulty

Implementation |

- The college 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
 - 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 BYO 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



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- 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, the College will refer to the website below.
 - Details of the College's Responding to Parental Hardship Strategies are contained in the College's pre-requisite *Parents Payments Policy*.
 - Please refer also to the *Complaints & Concerns, Parents Policy*, the *Using Digital Technology to Support Learning Policy* and the *Management Policy*.

Monitoring and review of the of the policy |

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update 22 May 2018).

Further Information and resources|

[Personal Devices – Planning, Practices and Policy checklist](#)

[Frequently asked questions](#)

[Parent Payments](#)

[Parent Complaints](#)

Reference: [Personal Devices - Parent Payments and Access school policy](#)

Date of approval by College Council | 23/10/2019

Review scheduled for October 2022