

# Rowville Primary School

## Hardship Policy



DET International CRICOS Code - 00861K



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact 9764 1955

## PURPOSE

Rowville Primary School Council recognises that some families experience financial hardship from time to time. Rowville Primary School will ensure that students can access all curriculum programs and participate in the full breadth of educational experiences as are enjoyed by all students.

## RECOGNISING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The staff at Rowville Primary School will be proactive in sensitively identifying families who may be reluctant to access arrangements and refer them to the Principal or Assistant Principal to determine if support is needed.

While hardship is usually identified when families request assistance from the Principal or Assistant Principal some families may be reluctant to access support from the school.

Teachers are often the first to see indicators of financial hardship. Staff that have reason to believe that a student's family may be experiencing hardship can then bring this to the attention of the Principal or Assistant Principal, to sensitively engage with the family and determine if support is needed.

Common indicators of financial hardship can include:

- Students not owning the same materials as other class members (such as bags, stationery or equipment)
- Recurring decisions to not purchase, or participate in, extra-curricular items and activities
- Uniforms that are incomplete or in poor condition
- Students disclosing hardship or contributing factors to teachers or ES staff– these can include, but are not limited to:
  - sudden changes such as loss of employment or illness in the family
  - disruption such as family breakdown or transitional housing
  - crisis events such as family violence or natural disasters
  - families who sought support for other department programs, such as the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund
  - carers or Health Care Card holders
  - refugee status, for example families seeking asylum who are on a Bridging or Temporary Protection Visa.

## IMPLEMENTATION

A family that is experiencing financial hardship and cannot afford to participate in the full school program should contact the Principal or Assistant Principal regarding the hardship. They will consider and arrange school-based support as appropriate to the family needs such as:

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- Making families aware of any possible government financial support schemes such as CSEF Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.
- Establishing flexible payment plans for extracurricular items and activities, or waive, reduce or extend payment as appropriate to the individual situation.
- Utilising the modest annual discretionary budget made available by School Council to assist financial hardship.
- Referring families to government or community support programs that may help them to purchase uniforms and other educational items to own.
- Providing support to families experiencing hardship in relation to the Rowville Primary School uniform policy.
- Exercising discretion prior to generating reminder notices for unpaid items for families experiencing hardship
- Maintaining supportive contact with families and revisiting agreed arrangements when requested.

### COMMUNICATION

Details of the CSEF will be included on excursion and camps notices

Parents/Carers will be advised to contact the Principal or Assistant Principal in the case of financial hardship whenever the school is inviting parents to pay for extra-curricular items and activities and/or educational items to own.

This policy will be available to families on the Rowville Primary School website or through contacting the Office for a print copy.

### RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION:

- DET Parent Payment Policy
- DET Supporting Families Experiencing Hardship

### EVALUATION

School Council will review the level and purpose of parent payments and voluntary contributions annually. In doing so, School Council will also consider its financial support programs and any Departmental advice or instruction.

### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2023
Approved by	Rowville Primary School Council
Next scheduled review date	October 2024