

Payments by Parents

This summary guide is part of Ministry Circular 2018/01
Payments by parents of students in schools

Payment types - There are three types of payments made to schools by parents.

1 Donations

- » Voluntary.
- » They can be for general purposes, or for a specific purpose.
- » They can be requested, but payment cannot be compelled or enforced.
- » Parents are always free to pay requested amounts in full, in part, or not at all.
- » GST is not payable.
- » Donation tax credits can be claimed.

2 Purchase of Goods and Services

- » All purchases/sign ups are voluntary, and cannot be compelled.
- » If purchase is agreed, payment can be enforced.
- » GST is payable.
- » Donation tax credits cannot be claimed.

3 Attendance Dues

- » Compulsory.
- » Payable to the proprietor of a state-integrated school.
- » Payment can be enforced.
- » GST is payable.
- » Donation tax credits cannot be claimed.

Item categories - In the examples below, there are four categories of items.

1 Enrolment

- » It is unlawful to charge or compel any payment for anything associated with the enrolment process.
- » Schools that do not have an enrolment scheme may seek donations towards enrolment costs, but care needs to be taken that parents do not perceive that the donation is a necessary part of the enrolment process.
- » Schools with enrolment schemes cannot seek donations towards enrolment costs (see <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2017-go3461>).

2 Curriculum

- » It is unlawful to charge or compel any payment for anything associated with delivery of the curriculum.
- » Donations may be sought for curriculum items.

3 Goods and Services

- » These are items outside of the curriculum.
- » There is no general expectation or requirement to purchase/sign up.

4 Compulsory

- » Attendance dues are the only compulsory payment in the school system.

Examples

Key: ✓ = Payment can be enforced ✗ = Payment cannot be compelled or enforced

Enrolment

Item	Item category	
Application fee	Enrolment	✗
Out-of-zone fee	Enrolment	✗
Out-of-zone ballot fee	Enrolment	✗
Bond	Enrolment	✗

Comment
As enrolment is free, there can be no charge for anything associated with the enrolment process.

Camps & Trips

Item	Item category	
Camp as part of specific course (example - Year 12 Outdoor Education)	Curriculum	✗
Camp as part of general curriculum (examples - Year 9 orientation camp, Year 7 EOTC camp)	Curriculum	✗
Field trip as part of specific course	Curriculum	✗
Trip/visit as part of general curriculum	Curriculum	✗
Weekend ski trip (extra-curricula)	Goods & Services	✓

Comment
Students may not be excluded from attending a camp or going on a trip that is part of curriculum delivery because of an inability or unwillingness to pay a donation towards the activity's cost.

It is reasonable for parents to be asked to contribute towards the cost of food and towards the costs which are involved in travel to and from the camp. Such a request is a request for a donation.

ICT

Item	Item category	
Internet charges (curriculum use)	Curriculum	✗
Internet charges (personal, non-curricular use)	Goods & Services	✓
Access to school network	Curriculum	✗
Use of school hardware	Curriculum	✗
Requiring students to provide devices such as tablets, smartphones, netbooks, laptops, Chrome Books	Curriculum	✗
Requiring students to provide software or pay for software licenses	Curriculum	✗
Requiring students to provide calculators	Curriculum	✗
Purchase of non-compulsory hardware or software	Goods & Services	✓

Comment
Information and communication technologies in schools (ICT) are a cost of delivering the curriculum.
Boards of Trustees must not levy a charge on families for the use of information technology.
Students cannot be barred from using school computers if their parents have not contributed to the purchase and/or maintenance of the computers, nor can enrolment in a computer studies course be made conditional on parental contributions.

Students must not be excluded from participating in courses or more general curriculum activity if they are unable to provide their own devices.

Schools may facilitate the purchase of non-compulsory hardware or software - for parents, this is a voluntary purchase of goods and services.

Music

Item	Item category	
Tuition from Itinerant Teachers of Music	Curriculum	×
Tuition – course-related, but not from Itinerant Teachers of Music	Curriculum	×
Tuition – extra-curricula	Goods & Services	✓
Instrument hire – course delivery	Curriculum	×
Instrument hire – extra-curricula	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

Programmes provided within school time may not be charged for. Itinerant Teachers of Music (ITMs) are paid for by the Ministry, and this tuition is part of a school's curriculum. Students who are taught by ITMs cannot be charged tuition fees.

Parents may be charged for the hire of musical instruments owned by the school and used by students outside the delivery of the music curriculum.

Special Programmes & Courses

Item	Item category	
English for Speakers of Other Languages	Curriculum	×
Reading recovery	Curriculum	×
Special education	Curriculum	×
Specialist units (examples – Montessori, Arrowsmith, Te Reo, Samoan Language)	Curriculum	×
Supplementary programmes (examples - Athletics, Education Perfect)	Curriculum	×
STAR courses	Curriculum	×
Tertiary-level courses offered as part of the school programme	Curriculum	×
Tertiary course (dual enrolment at tertiary institution)	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

Boards are able to purchase particular programmes for use in delivering the curriculum. Parents cannot be compelled to pay for them.

Catering for a student's specific learning needs is an expectation. Such provision is not a choice for families. There should be no charge to cover the cost of tuition.

Boards of Trustees may charge for optional programmes during school breaks or outside school hours. Parents cannot be required to enrol their children in such optional programmes.

A programme such as Athletics can be purchased for home use (rather than the school using it as a means of delivering the curriculum) – but purchase cannot be compelled.

STAR courses should not be treated differently from any other aspect of the curriculum.

Where the school facilitates enrolment in a tertiary course for a student, the student will be subject to whatever fees are associated with the tertiary course.

Where schools purchase tertiary-level courses that they then offer as part of the school programme for senior students, parents and students cannot be charged for these courses.

Course Materials

Item	Item category	
Materials used as part of curriculum delivery (examples – timber, food)	Curriculum	×
Take-home component of materials (examples – letterbox, item of clothing)	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

The cost of materials is part of the cost of curriculum delivery.

If a student chooses to take a completed item home, then payment for the cost of the materials in the item can be enforced. Boards of Trustees cannot insist that students take a finished project home and thus trigger the payment of a charge.

Parents should be informed where students are given the choice to purchase the result of a project so that they have notice of this choice and the likely cost.

Miscellaneous

Item	Item category	
Membership fees (examples – parent organisations, ex student organisations)	Goods & Services	✓
Insurance	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

Memberships and the purchase of insurances cannot be compelled.

State-integrated Schools

Item	Item category	
Attendance dues	Compulsory	✓
Lunches for day students	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

State-integrated schools are subject to the same law on free enrolment and free education as non-integrated schools.

In addition, proprietors are able to charge attendance dues up to the maximum amount approved by the Minister of Education, and may ask for donations for any purpose – including matters related to the special character of the school.

It should be made clear who the recipient of donations is – the board of trustees or the proprietor.

Swimming

Item	Item category	
Swimming as part of general curriculum (at school or off-site)	Curriculum	×
Swimming as voluntary activity (lunch time or after hours)	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

When a swimming session is part of the curriculum, students cannot be prevented from participating on the grounds that parents have not contributed towards costs.

Optional Activities

Item	Item category	
Visiting drama or music groups (non-curriculum)	Goods & Services	✓
Weekend sports teams	Goods & Services	✓
After-hours/lunchtime culture activities	Goods & Services	✓
After-hours/lunchtime sports activities	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

It should be made clear that participation in such activities is voluntary, and that participation incurs a charge.

These types of activities belong clearly in the category of 'voluntary purchase of a good or service'. They can be summarised as 'pay or don't play'.

Resources

Item	Item category	
Textbooks	Curriculum	×
Workbooks (compulsory)	Curriculum	×
Workbooks (voluntary purchase)	Goods & Services	✓
Photocopying/printing (curriculum use)	Curriculum	×
Photocopying/printing (personal, non-curricular use)	Goods & Services	✓
Stationery (purchased from school stationery shop)	Goods & Services	✓

Comment

Students are expected to supply stationery. If parents choose to purchase stationery from the school, then payment can be enforced. Parents should not be compelled to purchase from the school.

Textbooks are part of the cost of curriculum delivery. Students cannot be compelled to purchase or hire textbooks.

A deposit (to cover future possible damage) cannot be enforced, as students cannot be denied access to textbooks because of non-payment.

Photocopying/printing that is associated with the delivery of the curriculum must be provided by the Board.

If a workbook is made compulsory, then a Board may only ask for a donation towards its cost.

Workbooks can be sold, but purchase cannot be compelled.

Workbooks lie somewhere between textbooks, which are provided free to students, and stationery, which students are expected to provide for themselves. On the one hand, it is not absolutely necessary to write answers in the workbook itself; they could be written in an exercise book so that the workbook could then be used by other students in subsequent years.

On the other hand, workbooks can have ongoing usefulness to students. Because of the cost factor that is normally involved, it is not appropriate to expect students to purchase workbooks.