Dear Parents/Carers,

Merriang SDS is looking forward to another great year of teaching and learning and would like to advise you of our school’s voluntary financial contributions for 2023.

Schools provide students with free instruction to fulfil the standard Victorian curriculum and we want to assure you that all contributions are voluntary. Nevertheless, the ongoing support of our families ensures that our school can offer the best possible education and support for our students. We want to thank you for all you support, whether that’s through fundraising or volunteering your time. This has made a huge difference to our school and the programs we can offer.

Within our school this support has allowed us to organise and coordinate the best possible programs for our students. These financial contributions assist us with:
\* The purchasing of art, music and physical education equipment and resources, which in turn, supports them to be exemplary programs that coincide with our classroom teaching. Some of the other programs which we can offer because of your contributions include bicycle education, cooking, swimming and community access.
\* Allows us to have online subscriptions to resources that supports learning in the classroom.
\* Upgrade and purchase of additional IT devices and technology for the classrooms

All of these programs running alongside the traditional classroom teaching and learning programs are imperative to provide an effectively balanced education for your children.

**In 2023, parents/carers are asked to contribute $270 per child for the year towards curriculum contributions items.** Among other things these include all stationary used in the classroom, materials for cooking and sensory programs, student diary, printing, and photocopying. These items are distributed by the teachers to the students throughout the year.

Parents/carers are asked to pay for extra-curricular items and activities. When optional excursions or camps are scheduled, we will ask that you cover these costs and ensure you are given ample time to make payment arrangement for these optional activities. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

As per previous years, parent/carers are invited to make a voluntary contribution towards the school. These donations are tax deductible, and we can provide you with a receipt on request.

For further information on the Department’s Parent Payments Policy please see a one-page overview attached.

Yours sincerely,

Ebony Mitchell Molly Tankey

 Principal School Council President

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| **Curriculum Contributions** - items and activities that students use, or participate in, to access the Curriculum | **Annual Amount per Student** |
| ***Classroom consumables, materials & equipment**** Covers all classroom materials used by your child such as exercise and project books, pencils, textas, glue sticks, scissors, printing and photocopying of worksheets and learning materials, materials for cooking programs and sensory programs, student diary etc.
 | $140 |
| ***Online Subscriptions**** Covers student and classroom online subscriptions to programs such as Sunshine Multimedia, Twinkl, ABCYa and Help Kidz Learn where appropriate to your child’s class.
 | $30 |
| ***Community Access***Provision of transport to and from community based activities including swimming, local parks and other specified locations throughout the year as per each child’s curriculum plan.  | $100 |
| **Tax deductible contributions**  |
| Merriang SDS continues to welcome your voluntary contributions to support our school. You can make a general voluntary contribution that goes towards all of our school’s important priorities for 2023 as well as providing additional activities and services for all students. These donations are tax deductible, and we can provide you with a receipt on request. | $ |

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| **Extra-Curricular Items and Activities** | **Amount** | **Purchase** **(Please tick)** |
| ***Other optional camps and excursions to be scheduled***Optional camps and excursions as scheduled throughout 2023. The cost of these excursions will be advised throughout the year. | *TBA* |  |
| **Total Amount** | **$** |

**Extra-Curricular Items and Activities**

Merriang SDS offers a range of items and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides in order to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis.

### Financial Support for Families

Merriang SDS understands that some families may experience financial difficulty and offers a range of support options, including:

* The Camp, Sports & Excursion Fund is a government provided payment that contributes towards the cost of camps, sports and excursions for parents or carers with a current Health Care Card. Parents who currently receive CSEF and who remain eligible will automatically have their 2023 application processed by the school.
* State Schools Relief - This organisation may cover the cost of new school uniforms, shoes, books and more for disadvantaged students. State’s School’s Relief work directly on applications submitted by school’s so please contact Kaitlin on 9404 2839 if you would like to discuss this option.
* Flexible payment options can be arranged to suit your individual financial circumstances

For a confidential discussion about accessing these services, or if you would like to discuss alternative payment arrangements, contact Emma Allan (Business Manager) on 9464 3011 or email merriang.sds@education.vic.gov.au

### Payment methods

### Parent contributions towards the requested payments is essential to maintain the quality of education that we provide at Merriang SDS. We offer a variety of payment options to assist our families:\* Direct Deposit – BSB: 063599 Acc: 10017320 – Please state the students name as the reference \* Cash or Cheque

### Refunds

### Parent requests for refunds are subject to the discretion of the school and made on a case-by-case basis. Refunds will be provided where the school deems it is reasonable and fair to do so, taking into consideration whether a cost has been incurred, the Department’s Parent Payment Policy and Guidance, Financial Help for Families Policy and any other relevant information.

**parent PAYMENTS policy**

**ONE PAGE OVERVIEW**

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|  | FREE INSTRUCTION* Schools provide students with free instruction and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that are used by the school to fulfil the standard curriculum requirements in Victorian Curriculum F-10, VCE and VCAL.
* Schools may invite parents to make a financial contribution to support the school.
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|  | PARENT PAYMENT REQUESTSSchools can request contributions from parents under three categories:

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| Curriculum ContributionsVoluntary financial contributions for curriculum items and activities which the school deems necessary for students to learn the Curriculum. | Other ContributionsVoluntary financial contributions for non-curriculum items and activities that relate to the school’s functions and objectives. | Extra-Curricular Items and ActivitiesItems and activities that enhance or broaden the schooling experience of students and are above and beyond what the school provides for free to deliver the Curriculum. These are provided on a user-pays basis. |

* Schools may also invite parents to supply or purchase educational items to use and own (e.g. textbooks, stationery, digital devices).
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|  | FINANCIAL HELP FOR FAMILIES* Schools put in place financial hardship arrangements to support families who cannot pay for items or activities so that their child doesn’t miss out.
* Schools have a nominated parent payment contact person(s) that parents can have a confidential discussion with regarding financial hardship arrangements.
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|  | SCHOOL PROCESSES* Schools must obtain school council approval for their parent payment arrangements and publish all requests and communications for each year level on their school website for transparency.
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