

# Meeting the cost of *education*

This information sheet provides suggestions on assistance available to help you meet the cost of your children's education. For answers to some of the common questions about school costs in public schools visit the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) website [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au) or view their Parent Payment Policies [here](#).

## Parent Payments in Government Schools

The Education and Training Reform Act provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also allows schools to charge fees to parents for goods & services provided by the school to a child.

Schools can request payment for:

- ⇒ **Essential learning items** such as text books, stationery, ID cards, locks etc. Parents may choose to provide their own items where practical and appropriate.
- ⇒ **Optional items** offered in addition to the standard curriculum, which you are not obligated to pay. These may include school magazines, class photos, music tuition, formals etc.

Schools may invite **voluntary financial contributions** for things such as a building or library fund but it is optional to pay it.

## How can my child's school help?

If you are experiencing hardship, speak to the **School Wellbeing Officer, Principal or nominated parent payment contact person** about support options available. Your school can:

- ⇒ Waive, reduce or defer school fees
- ⇒ Extend deadlines or set up flexible payment plans
- ⇒ Give you the opportunity to provide cheaper alternatives or similar materials where possible & practical
- ⇒ Refer you to government/community assistance programs
- ⇒ Refer you to State Schools' Relief for uniforms & shoes
- ⇒ Organise a second hand text book sale at school
- ⇒ Provide a personal device at school if you cannot afford to buy or lease a device
- ⇒ Provide interpreting and translation services

## Uniform and school shoes

**State Schools' Relief (SSR)** provides assistance with uniforms, shoes/runners, swimwear, underwear, scientific calculators, bags, text books, myki cards and [glasses](#) to students in need who are attending a Victorian government school. In 2020, Prep & Year 7 recipients of the Camps Sports & Excursion Fund (CSEF) automatically qualify for a uniform pack through SSR. Additional assistance is available through their welfare program. Speak to your school Principal or Wellbeing Officer to apply.

[www.ssr.net.au](http://www.ssr.net.au)



## Equipment

**Computers:** If parents choose not to purchase or lease a device, the school must provide a device for your child during the times it is required at school. Information about the personal devices policy can be found at the [DET](#) website.

Low cost and refurbished computers can be purchased from:

- ⇒ **Computerbank:** (03) 9600 9161  
[www.computerbank.org.au](http://www.computerbank.org.au)
- ⇒ **WorkVentures:** 1800 112 205  
[www.workventures.com.au](http://www.workventures.com.au)



## Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund

Financial assistance provided by the Victorian Government and paid to the school to assist eligible families to cover the costs of [camps, sport and excursions](#) in primary and secondary school. Preps and Year 7's need to register. Unused funds carry over to the next year, to a new school, to other siblings or to other families in need. Contact your school to make an application.

## Travel Costs

**Student Pass:** Full time Victorian students attending an approved school can apply for a Student Pass through Public Transport Victoria. This may be cheaper than other Myki fares. Call 1800 800 007 or visit the PTV website.  
[www.ptv.vic.gov.au](http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au)

**State Schools' Relief (SSR)** is piloting a new Myki program to help support school attendance for students in primary and secondary schools who are living in financially difficult circumstances. Speak to your school Principal or Wellbeing Officer for more information.

**Conveyance Allowance Program (CAP):** Financial assistance to help families in rural and regional Victoria with the cost of transporting their children to their nearest government, non-government or specialist school. Contact your school for further information or visit the [DET](#) website.

**Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme:** Financial help for students who cannot attend a state school due to geographical isolation, special education needs, no reasonable access to school or changing circumstances. You may also be able to claim for the cost of home schooling your children. Call DHS on 132 318 or visit the [Human Services](#) website.

## Child Care

**Child Care Subsidy (CCS):** A [subsidy](#) paid directly to child care providers to reduce the amount of child care fees you pay. Approved child care includes long day & occasional care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care & in home care. An eligible child must be 13 years or younger or 14-18 with a disability & meet immunisation requirements.

**Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS):** A top up payment in addition to CCS to help with the cost of approved child care. To qualify you must be transitioning to work from income support payments, be a grandparent in receipt of income support & a principal carer of your grandchildren, be experiencing temporary financial hardship, or require practical assistance to support your child's safety & well-being. [Apply](#) online through myGov or call the DHS Families line on 136 150.

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

**Outside School Hours Care (OSHC):** Provides care for primary school age children outside school hours and during school holidays. Talk to your school about what is available. School holiday care for secondary school students may be available in your area. Check with your local council.

**School Breakfast Clubs:** Offers a healthy [breakfast](#) for children in disadvantaged primary schools.

## Student Scholarships

The Department of Education and Training (DET) administers a range of [student scholarships](#) available to primary, secondary and tertiary students. Visit the [DET](#) website for information.

## Community Organisations

### Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic)

Some CISVic member agencies provide support to families through their *Back to School Program*. Emergency relief, information and support is also available for families in need. [www.cisvic.org.au](http://www.cisvic.org.au)

### Smith Family Learning for Life

Support and financial assistance to help disadvantaged children stay at school. The program runs in select disadvantaged areas. [www.thesmithfamily.com.au](http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au)

### A Start in Life

Financial assistance for disadvantaged students and families to ensure they can access the same learning opportunities as their peers. For information phone (02) 9264 3017. [www.astartinlife.org.au](http://www.astartinlife.org.au)

### Opening the Doors Foundation

Education assistance for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in an independent educational institution in Victoria. [www.openingthedoors.org.au](http://www.openingthedoors.org.au)

### The Queen's Fund

Financial assistance with the cost of educational expenses for children. Applications must be completed by a social worker or similar. [www.queensfund.org.au](http://www.queensfund.org.au)

## Microfinance Programs

### Good Shepherd

Financial programs for people on low or limited incomes that may assist families with educational costs and other expenses. The **No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)** gives access to fair and safe credit (up to \$1,200) for essential educational items. [www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au](http://www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au)

### Saver Plus

Financial education and up to \$500 in matched savings for education costs for individuals and families with regular income from work. For information phone 1300 610 355. [www.bsl.org.au](http://www.bsl.org.au)

## Budget Planner

### Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC)

ASIC's Money Smart website has useful information on how to [reduce back to school costs](#). It includes a comprehensive online budget planner to help families work out school expenses. [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au)

## What can I do to reduce costs?

- ⇒ If you enter into a payment plan for school fees make sure you budget adequately for rent, food and bills
- ⇒ Plan school lunches, make your own snacks, buy in bulk
- ⇒ Cycle to school if there is a good, safe route
- ⇒ Swap books and uniforms with friends & neighbours
- ⇒ Reuse stationery— no need to buy them new each year
- ⇒ Label all school items
- ⇒ Shop around for sales items rather than expensive brands. Stationery shops may be cheaper than school ordering. Officeworks will price match and give a discount if their advertised price is the more expensive.
- ⇒ Buy & sell new & used school items online at:

[www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au)

[www.angusrobertson.com.au](http://www.angusrobertson.com.au)

[www.bookdepository.com](http://www.bookdepository.com)

[www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)

[www.gumtree.com.au](http://www.gumtree.com.au)



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Council of Single Mothers and their Children Inc.

T: 03 9654 0622 Outside Melbourne: 1300 552 511

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