

Meeting the cost of education 2025

November 2024

Council of
Single Mothers
and their Children



School costs & fees



Victorian Government 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 from Foundation to Year 10, VCE and VCAL.

Schools can request contributions under 3 categories:

- ⇒ **Curriculum contributions** are voluntary contributions that cover necessary curriculum items and activities for the student to learn the curriculum.
- ⇒ **Other contributions** are voluntary contributions for non-curriculum items and activities relating to the schools function and objectives.
- ⇒ **Extra-curricular items & activities** are optional and can include optional events, excursions, camps, sport, music or items that don't relate to the curriculum.

*** Schools cannot consider non-payment of curriculum or other contributions as an outstanding payment.**

*** Contribution requests cannot be carried forward from the previous year.**

Subject enrolment fees

Subject enrolment fees (including VET courses and electives) are voluntary contributions and cannot be included as extra-curricular items or activities.

Educational items for students to own

Students can choose to own items such as stationery, textbooks (paper or digital), calculators or digital devices. If a parent does not provide or purchase their own educational items, the school must ensure the student has free access to what is needed at school to enable the delivery of the curriculum. Schools are not required to provide items to own or keep on a one-to-one basis.

Camps & Excursions

Schools may ask parents to make a curriculum contribution towards the costs of compulsory excursions related to the curriculum.

*** Schools cannot restrict student attendance or participation in excursions if their parents have not paid.**

Click on the link for more information:

www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/parent-payment/policy

How can my school help?

Schools must prepare for and support families who are experiencing financial hardship to enable students to participate fully in the school program.

If you are experiencing hardship, speak to the school Wellbeing Officer, Principal or nominated parent payment contact person.

Schools should:

- ⇒ **Remind** families that curriculum & other contributions are voluntary.
- ⇒ **Establish** flexible payment plans for extra curricular items and activities, or waive, reduce or extend payments.
- ⇒ **Create** strategies that assist with the exchange of second-hand items to own such as textbooks, uniforms and stationery.
- ⇒ **Refer** to government or community assistance programs that help families purchase uniforms or educational items to own.
- ⇒ **Communicate** in a language that is easy to understand, culturally appropriate, inclusive and non-judgmental.
- ⇒ **Provide** interpreting and translation services.



www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/financial-help-families/policy



Uniform & shoes

State Schools' Relief (SSR) provides support to Victorian students attending a government primary, secondary or specialist school.

SSR can assist with uniforms, school shoes, socks, hats, underwear, swimwear, school bags, graphing calculators and 30-day travel passes. Assistance for textbooks and digital devices will be on a case by case basis.

Preps and Year 7 recipients of the Camps Sports & Excursion Fund (CSEF) automatically qualify for a uniform package.

Additional uniform assistance is available throughout the year through the welfare program. All referrals are made through the school.

<https://stateschoolsrelief.org.au>

Council of Single Mothers and their Children (CSMC)

T: 03 9654 0622 Outside Melbourne: 1300 552 511

W: www.csmc.org.au E: csmc@csmc.org.au

Government assistance



Child Care

Care Subsidy (CCS): Paid to approved child care providers to reduce the amount of child care fees families pay. An eligible child must be 13 years or younger and not in high school, or 14-18 with a disability.

www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): A top-up payment in addition to CCS. To qualify you must be transitioning to work from income support, be a grandparent (principal carer) receiving income support, be experiencing temporary financial hardship, or require practical assistance to support your child's safety and wellbeing.

www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy

In Home Care (IHC) provides flexible care that supports working families where other options are not available or appropriate. Contact the In Home Care Support Agency for more information on 1800 993 737.

ihc.org.au

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC): Care for primary school age children outside school hours and during school holidays. Talk to your school about what is available or check with your local council for secondary school options.

School Student Broadband Initiative

SSBI provides free home internet for one year for families with children enrolled in an Australian school who do not have an active NBN network internet service at home. Families have until 31 December 2024 to apply. Contact CSMC or the National Referral Centre on 1800 954 610.

www.schools.vic.gov.au/school-student-broadband-initiative-ssbi

Scholarships

The Department of Education (DE) manages a range of primary, secondary and tertiary level scholarships on behalf of various trusts.

Applications close 1 February, 2025.

www.vic.gov.au/student-scholarships



Marrung education scholarships support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to complete years 11 and 12. There are thirty scholarships of \$5,000 over 2 years. Applications are open from 15 July–13 September 2024.

www.vic.gov.au/marrung

Camps, Sports & Excursions

The Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF) provides payments for eligible students to attend school camps, sports and excursions in primary and secondary school. Only one application is allowed for separated families where both parents hold a concession card. Unspent funds are transferred to the next year or new school. Contact your school to apply.

www.vic.gov.au/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund



School Saving Bonus (SSB) is available for 2025. The one-off \$400 payment per student attending a Victorian government school or eligible students in non-government schools is to help cover the costs of school uniforms, textbooks, excursions and activities. Contact your school for more information. www.vic.gov.au/school-saving-bonus

Get Active Kids Voucher Program helps eligible families get their kids involved in organised sport and recreation activities by reimbursing the cost of membership and registration fees, uniforms and equipment. Eligible children may receive up to \$200 each per round.

www.getactive.vic.gov.au/vouchers/

Travel



Victorian Student Pass provides unlimited travel on all public transport within Victoria to full time Victorian primary and secondary students. The cost depends on the type of pass. Call 1800 800 007 or visit PTV.

www.ptv.vic.gov.au

Conveyance Allowance Program (CAP):

A contribution towards the cost of transporting students to and from their nearest school by public transport, car or school bus where the nearest school is more than 4.8km from home. Students must live in rural and regional Victoria or attend an eligible specialist school. Contact your school for more information or click on the link below.

www.vic.gov.au/travelling-school

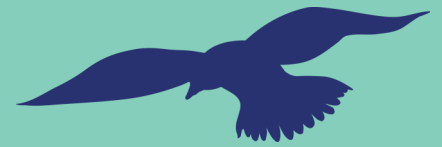
Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme: A group of payments for parents or carers of children who cannot attend a state school due to geographical isolation, disability or special needs. Contact Centrelink to apply.

www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/assistance-for-isolated-children-scheme

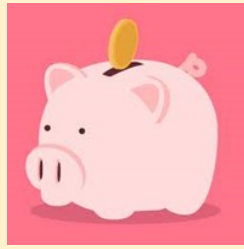
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Reducing your costs



- ⇒ **Budget** for rent, food and bills before entering into a payment plan for extra curricular items and activities. Be realistic in what you can afford.
- ⇒ **Plan** school lunches, make your own snacks, buy in bulk
- ⇒ **Label** all school items
- ⇒ **Cycle** to school if there is a good, safe route
- ⇒ **Reuse** stationery rather than buying new each year
- ⇒ **Swap** books and uniforms with friends & neighbours or at your school's swap days
- ⇒ **Shop around** for sale items rather than expensive brands. Stationery shops may be cheaper than school ordering. Officeworks will price match and give a 20% discount on identical items if their advertised price is the more expensive.
- ⇒ **Buy & sell** new & used school items online at:
 - www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au
 - www.ebay.com.au
 - www.facebook.com/marketplace
 - www.gumtree.com.au
- ⇒ **Online** bookshops can be cheaper than buying from your school book seller and may offer free postage. Make sure you purchase the correct edition.
Try these sellers:
 - www.angusrobertson.com.au
 - www.amazon.com.au/
- ⇒ **Use** your own laptop or tablet if it is compatible with the school's network
- ⇒ **Low cost, refurbished or free computers** are available at:
 - WorkVentures: 1800 112 205
www.workventures.com.au
 - Computerbank: 03 9600 9161
www.computerbank.org.au
 - Glee Givers (Womble Tech):
<https://gleegivers.au/>
- ⇒ **Apply** for a scholarship if your child is eligible.

Financial programs

Good Shepherd

Good Shepherd provides various financial programs for people on low or limited incomes that may assist families with educational costs and other expenses.

No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) gives access to fair and safe credit (up to \$2,000) for essential educational items.

goodshep.org.au

Saver Plus

This program offers financial education and up to \$500 in matched savings for education related expenses for individuals and families with regular income from work or Centrelink/ child support.

For information phone 1300 610 355.

www.bsl.org.au/services/saving-and-managing-money/saver-plus/



Budgeting

The **National Debt Helpline** provides free financial counselling information and advice over the phone, via webchat and on their website. Call 1800 007 007 or visit ndh.org.au

Financial counselling

Financial counsellors assist Victorians in financial difficulty by providing information, support and advocacy. Working within the community sector, services are free, independent and confidential.

fcvic.org.au/find-a-financial-counsellor

Money Smart

Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) 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.

moneysmart.gov.au





Community organisations

Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic)

CISVic agencies provide support, information, referral and emergency relief to families in need. Visit the website to find your local agency.

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. Referrals are made by the school.

www.thesmithfamily.com.au

Opening the Doors Foundation

Education assistance for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in a Catholic or Independent educational institution in Victoria.

www.openingthedoors.org.au

Les Twentyman Foundation

The Back to School Program provides educational resources, textbooks and stationery for young people experiencing financial difficulty and unstable living conditions. Referrals via school wellbeing worker or support worker. Call 0491 218 082 or visit:

<https://lftfoundation.com.au/our-services/back-to-school-2/>

Kids Under Cover/DFFH student scholarship program

The scholarship program helps young people living in public or community housing, or those at risk of homelessness, get the support they need to stay in school and achieve their full potential. Students must be studying in Year 11 or 12.

<https://www.kuc.org.au/our-programs/scholarships/dffh-student-scholarship-program/>

Frank Hall-Bentick Education Fund

Formerly the Australian Disability and Indigenous Peoples' Education Fund, this fund assists indigenous and non-indigenous people with disability to participate in both formal and informal education programs through small financial grants.

<https://fhbef.org/>

The Queen's Fund

Financial assistance for single women and children in Victoria who are in distress, crisis or emergency situations. Applications must be completed by a social worker or other support worker.

www.queensfund.org.au

Council of Single Mothers & their Children (CSMC)

CSMC is a non-profit organisation that provides specialist support services for single mother families and advocates on their behalf.

We provide free and confidential telephone and email support, information and referral on a range of issues including emergency relief, housing, parenting, education, social security, child support, family law, family violence and anything else single mothers or services supporting them wish to discuss.

Our Back-to-School program provides support, information and referral on school related issues.

We provide limited financial assistance to single mother families living in Victoria who are in need.

For more information, call the CSMC Support Line on 9654 0622 or outside of Melbourne on 1300 522 511, Monday to Friday, 9.30am -3.00pm, or email csmc@csmc.org.au

www.csmc.org.au



Further information

Victorian Government website

www.vic.gov.au/school

How to raise a complaint about your school

www.vic.gov.au/school-complaints

Department of Education policy library

www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal

Parents Victoria

Parents Victoria (PV) is a statewide organisation representing parents of students in Victorian government schools.

www.parentsvictoria.asn.au

For families living outside of Victoria, visit the education department website in your state or territory.

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