



**EDUCATION – WHAT ARE YOU ENTITLED TO IN 2014?**

The cost of education is high no matter what form of education you are hoping to offer a child in your care. For many carers, DHS or your community services agency may well be able to assist with covering the costs associated with putting children through school. For other carers, particularly those in non-statutory kinship arrangements, this assistance is not always forthcoming. The following subsidies and fee assistance packages are available to all statutory and non-statutory carers:

Student Travel Expenses			
What's Available.	Eligibility	Relevant Dates	How to access
<p><b>Conveyance Allowance</b></p> <p>Source: DEECD Website</p>	<p>The conveyance allowance is a form of financial assistance for parents/carers to transport children to and from school in rural and regional Victoria. Allowances are available for public transport, private car and private bus.</p> <p>Details of all criteria are available at <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/conveyance.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/conveyance.aspx</a></p>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>Further information about the allowance and the relevant applications forms are available from your school or at <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/conveyance.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/finance/Pages/conveyance.aspx</a></p> <p>Contact FCAV for a copy of the most recent Conveyance Policy available from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.</p>
<p><b>Victorian Public Transport Student Concession Card</b></p>	<p>Primary and secondary students must be studying full time and attend a school listed in the approved list of schools. Full time VCE and VCAL students studying at TAFE can apply.</p> <p>If you are a student aged 16 and under (and don't travel with a</p>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>See Public Transport Victoria's <i>Travelling with Student Concessions</i> web page for details and to down load an application form:</p>

<p>Source: Public Transport Victoria</p>	<p>Student Pass) you can travel on concession fares. You do not need a concession card.</p> <p>If you are a student aged 17 and over, you must carry a valid <u>concession card</u>.</p> <p>If you are 17 and over (and not travelling with a Student Pass) and have a Victorian Health Care Card, you can use your Health Care Card as proof of your concession entitlement. You do not need to apply for a Victorian Public Transport (VTP) Student Concession Card to travel on concession fares.</p> <p>A school identification card does not entitle students aged 17 years and over to buy concession fares.</p>		<p><a href="http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/#3">http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/#3</a></p> <p>Applications can be lodged at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PTV Hub at 750 Collins Street</li> <li>- Premium Stations</li> <li>- Staffed V/Line stations and V/Line ticket agents.</li> </ul> <p>Call <b>1800 800 007</b> for locations and operating hours.</p>
<p><b>Victorian Student Pass</b></p> <p>Source: Public Transport Victoria</p>	<p>The Victorian Student Pass gives you unlimited travel on metropolitan trains, trams and buses, on all regional town bus services and all V/Line train and coach services operating wholly within Victoria.</p> <p>The pass is a myki and should be shown to public transport staff on request when travelling on services where myki is not operating.</p> <p>To travel on this pass, you must also have a VPT Student Concession Card with your pass number endorsed on your concession card. The pass and concession card must be carried at all times when travelling.</p>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>See Public Transport Victoria's <i>Travelling with Student Concessions</i> web page for details and to down load an application form:</p> <p><a href="http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/#3">http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/concessions/students/#3</a></p> <p>Call <b>1800 800 007</b> for lodgement locations and operating hours.</p>
<p><b>School Bus Program</b></p> <p>Source: Public Transport Victoria</p>	<p>Primary and Secondary school students</p> <p>The School Bus Program is an extensive school bus network that provides travel at no cost to eligible students attending government and non-government schools and living in rural and regional Victoria. Students deemed ineligible to travel at no cost may access a school bus service upon payment of a fare.</p>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>Contact your school to see if a free school bus operates within your area.</p> <p>See Public Transport Victoria <a href="http://ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/school-buses/">http://ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/school-buses/</a></p>

<p><b>Students with Disabilities Transport Program</b></p> <p>Source: DEECD Website</p>	<p>Students attending a specialist school may be eligible for travel assistance through the provision of buses, taxis, conveyance allowances and other transport solutions.</p> <p>A specialist school student must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be approved under the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)</li> <li>• Be eligible for enrolment at the school they attend</li> <li>• Reside within the Designated Transport Area (DTA) of the school attended</li> <li>• Be enrolled at the special school three days a week or more</li> </ul>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>Your child's school will be able to provide you with further details.</p> <p>Contact your school to see if you are eligible for travel assistance.</p>
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To find contact details for your child's school go to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx>

For further assistance or advice please email the Dept of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Financial Services Division – 'Student Transport Unit' at: [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Financial Assistance			
What's Available.	Eligibility	Relevant Dates	How to access
<p><b>Education Maintenance Allowance</b></p>	<p>In 2014, the EMA payments to eligible parents will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$200 for parents of eligible Prep students</li> <li>• \$150 for parents of all other eligible primary school students</li> <li>• \$300 for parents of eligible Year 7 students</li> <li>• \$250 for parents of all other eligible secondary school students up to the age of 16.</li> </ul> <p>Applications made under the foster parent category apply to the foster child only. Temporary caregivers through the Department of</p>	<p>The EMA is paid in two instalments annually (70% in March and 30% in August).</p>	<p>You apply for the EMA with an application form that you can get from your child's school. You need to lodge this application form at your child's school by 28 February 2014 for the first installment.</p> <p>You don't need to lodge a separate application for installment two unless your child changes schools before Term 3.</p>

<p>Source: DEECD Website</p>	<p>Human Services are considered to be foster parents*.</p> <p>* Please note: foster parents must provide their school a copy of the letter stating temporary care arrangements from the Department of Human Services or the courts for the school's records.</p>		<p>The closing date for installment 2 is 1 August 2014.</p> <p>Late applications will not be accepted.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website has more details: <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/ema.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/ema.aspx</a></p>
<p>Source: Commonwealth Department of Human Services</p>	<p>Young people may be eligible for Youth Allowance if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 to 21 years old and looking for full-time work or undertaking approved activities</li> <li>• 18 to 24 years old and studying full-time</li> <li>• 16 and 17 years old and have completed year 12 or equivalent, need to live away from home in order to study, or considered independent for Youth Allowance</li> <li>• 16 to 24 years old and undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>For further information visit your local Centrelink office or call Centrelink on 13 61 50.</p> <p><a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance">http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance</a></p>
<p><b>Independence for Youth Allowance</b></p> <p>A higher rate of Youth Allowance may be payable if the young person is considered to be independent.</p>	<p>If you are 22 years or over you are automatically considered independent.</p> <p>If you are under 22 years, you may be considered independent if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can show you have supported yourself through employment</li> <li>• are or have been legally married or in a registered relationship</li> <li>• are living in a de facto relationship with another person as a <u>member of a couple</u> for at least 12 months</li> <li>• have, or have had, a dependent child</li> <li>• have a partial capacity to work as determined by a Job</li> </ul>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>For further information visit your local Centrelink office or call Centrelink on 13 61 50.</p> <p><a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance">http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance</a></p>

<p>Source: Commonwealth Department of Human Services</p>	<p>Capacity Assessment (job seekers only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are unable to live at home</li> <li>• have parents who cannot exercise their responsibilities</li> <li>• are a refugee without parents who are living in Australia</li> <li>• are an orphan and have not been legally adopted, or</li> <li>• are in state care, or only stopped being in state care because of your age</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Assistance for Isolated Children</b></p> <p>Source: Commonwealth Department of Human Services</p>	<p>Help for parents and carers of primary or secondary students who cannot go to an appropriate state school because of geographical isolation, disability or special health needs.</p> <p>This includes primary and secondary school students and school-aged students taking tertiary courses.</p>		<p>For further information visit your local Centrelink office or call Centrelink on 13 61 50.</p> <p><a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customers/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children">http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customers/services/centrelink/assistance-for-isolated-children</a></p>
<p><b>ABSTUDY</b></p> <p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Assistance Scheme.</p> <p>Source: Commonwealth Department of Human Services</p>	<p>To be eligible for ABSTUDY you must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian</li> <li>• able to meet residence requirements</li> <li>• enrolled in an approved course or an Australian Apprentice, and</li> <li>• not receiving any other government assistance to study or complete your apprenticeship</li> </ul>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>For further information visit your local Centrelink office or call Centrelink on 13 61 50.</p> <p><a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customers/services/centrelink/abstudy">http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customers/services/centrelink/abstudy</a></p>
<p><b>Student Scholarships</b></p>	<p>The scholarships are offered to primary, secondary and tertiary students and range in value from \$300 to \$2300. They are generally awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate academic achievement</li> <li>• demonstrate participation in their school and local community</li> </ul>	<p>Applications close for students on Friday, 31 January 2014.</p>	<p>Further information about the allowance and the relevant applications forms are available from <a href="https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/">https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/</a></p>

<p>Source: DEECD Website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are in financial need (determined by the parents/guardians being in receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance, the Family Tax Benefit (Centrelink reference number required) or the students themselves receiving the Youth Allowance).</li> </ul> <p>However there are scholarships that are not based on the above criteria, especially scholarships connected to the Police Force and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, Locomotive Division.</p>		
<p><b>Kindergarten / Pre-School</b></p> <p>Source: DEECD Website</p>	<p>The kindergarten fee subsidy is available if a child holds, or has a parent or guardian who holds, one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Commonwealth Health Care Card</li> <li>a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card</li> <li>a Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or a Resolution of Status (RoS) visa, Class CD, subclass 851</li> <li>a Refugee/Special Humanitarian Visa 200-217</li> <li>an Asylum Seeker Bridging Visa A - F</li> </ul> <p>or if the child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a triplet or quadruplet</li> <li>identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.</li> </ul> <p>If your three year old child is Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander or has been supported by Child Protection or Child FIRST, they may be eligible for up to 15 hours of a free or low cost kindergarten program.</p>	<p>Any time</p>	<p>For further information contact your local council or kindergarten or visit <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/pages/earllystart.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/pages/earllystart.aspx</a>.</p> <p><b>Note: Many areas now have a centralised enrolment process for children entering kindergarten.</b></p>
<p><b>Schoolkids Bonus</b></p>	<p>As Parliament is yet to pass the legislation to end the Schoolkids Bonus, it will now be paid to eligible families and students in January 2014. Payment of future instalments of the Schoolkids Bonus, including for July 2014, will depend on whether the legislation is passed by Parliament in 2014.</p> <p>To be eligible for the Schoolkids Bonus, you must either be a</p>	<p>Families and students who receive fortnightly payments will be paid the Schoolkids Bonus from 3 - 17 January 2014.</p>	<p>For further information go to: <a href="http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customers/services/schoolkids-bonus">http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customers/services/schoolkids-bonus</a></p>

<p>Source: Commonwealth Department of Human Services</p>	<p>parent or carer who gets Family Tax Benefit Part A for a dependent child who is:</p> <p>under 16 years of age and in primary or secondary education between 16 years and turning 19 years of age in the calendar year and in full time secondary study, or exempt from full time study</p> <p>The Schoolkids Bonus will be paid to primary and secondary students if they are: turning 19 years of age or younger in the calendar year, and receiving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Allowance</li> <li>• ABSTUDY (Living Allowance)</li> <li>• Disability Support Pension</li> <li>• Carer Payment</li> <li>• Parenting Payment</li> <li>• Special Benefit</li> </ul> <p>turning 19 years of age or younger in the calendar year, and receiving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Support Pension</li> <li>• Carer Payment</li> <li>• Parenting Payment, or</li> <li>• Special Benefit</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Education Assistance Initiative:</b></p> <p><b>Education and Medical Expense Payment:</b></p> <p>Source: Victorian Department of Human Services</p>	<p>For children placed in foster care and kinship care by the Victorian child protection system.</p> <p>For children placed in foster care, kinship care and permanent care by the Victorian child protection system</p>	<p>Installments are paid in arrears to carers in the months of January, April, July and October and are based on the number of days a child has been in placement (minimum of seven days in each quarter).</p>	<p>Check with your agency worker / DHS worker.</p> <p>Or contact the DHS Caregiver Reimbursement Help Desk: Ph: 1300 552 319</p>

### **Parent Payments in Victorian Government Schools**

There are three categories of education items or services for which schools can request payment from parents or guardians:

1. Essential education items for which the parent/guardian must pay to provide, or for which the parent/guardian must pay the school to provide (e.g. text books, stationary, school uniforms where required)
2. Optional educational items which are offered on a user-pays basis allowing the parent /guardian to choose whether their child has access to such items; (eg: school magazines or extracurricular activities)
3. Voluntary financial contributions which parents and guardians may be invited to donate to the school;

School Councils are required to develop their own policy around these payments, with the stipulation being that the developed policy be in line with the Department's policy and it be made available to all parents and guardian upon request.

For further information go to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/pages/parentpayments.aspx>

### **State Schools' Relief Committee**

The State Schools' Relief Committee Incorporated is an autonomous body that assists needy students attending government schools in Victoria with school clothing and footwear.

All requests for assistance must be lodged with the School Principal, and the Principal must then lodge an application for assistance on behalf of the parent or guardian with the State Schools' Relief Committee.

Check out the website: <https://ssr.net.au/>

Note: Most schools will offer a second hand uniform shop which provides parents/guardian with a cheaper uniform option for their child.



Most schools employ the services of a Welfare Officer and/or a School Chaplain. These staff members will be more than happy to assist you to access information around the school's specific policies relating to the services outlined in this supplement. If you encounter difficulties when trying to access any of these services, please contact FCAV and we will do what we can to liaise and facilitate this process.

If you are having difficulty in meeting the financial obligations of schooling a child in your care, please ask for help. Refer to your DHS case worker , agency worker, support group or the Foster Care Association of Victoria if your need help or advice beyond what has been provided here.