

## Difficulties paying school fees

If you have children in Primary and Secondary school and are finding it difficult with the costs of education there is financial assistance available .

This assistance is in the form of a

- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- and
- State Schools Relief Grant (SSRG)

## General Principles

- All types of school material charges to parents and parent voluntary contributions must be approved by the school council.
- Expectations about the likely level of these contributions should be clearly communicated in writing to the parents so that family budgeting can occur
- Payment for school material charges for the coming year should not be expected prior to the end of the school year. Arrangements should be made available to parents to make payment early in the year.
- Schools cannot charge an enrolment fee as a condition of enrolment, advancement to the next year level, or access to standard educational program.
- Non payment of requested voluntary parent contributions must not be used to deny advancement to the next year level or access to the standard educational program.
- A student cannot be refused access to programs, materials or services which are part of the school program.
- A student must not be denied access to a particular subject which is part of the school program due to their inability to contribute to the relevant program/elective charge or where parents choose not to pay for that program/elective charge.
- Where a parent pays for particular materials or services, the school may not use this payment for other purposes without parent approval.

## Parent Supported Materials

Below is a list of some items a school will expect a parent to purchase for their child.

- Text books
- Stationary
- Materials for electives, such as Home economics, etc.
- Costs for specialist programs
- Camps and Excursions
- School identification cards
- School diaries

The Education Maintenance Allowance can be used by your child's school to purchase these items with your approval.

## Eligibility

If you have children in Primary and Secondary school and are finding it difficult with the costs of education there is financial assistance available .

## Voluntary Contributions

Below is a list of some items a school may ask you to contribute money towards.

- Building and grounds beautification
- Extra equipment purchases
- Library fund.
- General donations to the school.
- Additional computers for the school.
- Working bee levy

The Education Maintenance Allowance cannot be used for these items as you do not have to pay for these.

- Where you choose not to pay for these voluntary contributions, your child must not be treated differently from other students whose parents do pay for voluntary contributions. Access to curriculum and facilities such as the library, computers, sporting activities and graduation ceremonies must be for all students regardless of any voluntary contribution.
- The public identification of students or their parents who have not made a voluntary contribution is unacceptable and **must not** occur in any circumstance.
- It is unacceptable to send repeated requests for voluntary contributions beyond the initial notice to all parents. Under no circumstances can collector of any type be used by schools to obtain any funds from parents.

## Uniforms

Students who are eligible for the Education Maintenance

Allowance are also eligible for the State Schools Relief grant.

This grant can be used to purchase items such as school uniform and school shoes.

To obtain this grant, parents should approach their child's principle to apply for the grant. A state school principle is required to apply for this grant if one of their students is eligible and a request has been made.

## Department of Education

### Education Maintenance Allowance

### Information Brochure

Department of Education & Training

Ph: 1800 809 834

Fax: 9637 2626

Email: [edline@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:edline@edumail.vic.gov.au)

### North East Housing Service

52—56 Mary St,

Preston 3072

Ph: 9479 0700

Fax: 9470 4400

