

# Back to School Information Pack 2026

## Reminder

### Schools fees are voluntary for Government schools





Government schools provide students with free curriculum and ensure students have free access to all items, activities and services that they need for their regular classes.

The school may invite you to:

- Make a voluntary contribution to support the school.
- purchase extra-curricular items and activities
- purchase educational items to own.

You are not required to make payments or voluntary financial contributions to your school. Schools cannot refuse your child school if you do not contribute.

### For additional support

-  03 9481 0800
-  [vaeai@vaeai.org.au](mailto:vaeai@vaeai.org.au)
-  <https://www.vaeai.org.au/>
-  144 Westbourne Grove, Northcote VIC 3070



### Start at your school

First off talk with your schools' principal, assistant principal, KESO or Koorie support worker, wellbeing coordinator or even a teacher you get along with to talk about your situation and see what supports they can offer.

#### How do I apply?

Ask your school about their Financial Help for Families policy or contact DE below.

#### For more information.

-  1800 338 663
-  [enquiries@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@education.vic.gov.au)

## State-wide Information

### State Schools Relief

State Schools Relief supports families in buying school supplies, such as shoes, uniforms, books & learning devices in State Schools for disadvantaged students attending **Government schools**.

They offer the following:

- Glasses for Kids Program. Providing glasses for students with visual impairments.
- Graphing Calculator Program. Providing graphic calculators for secondary students doing STEM subjects in terms 1 & 4.
- iPad Program. Providing iPads for non-verbal students.
- Travel Pass Program. 30-Day Travel Pass for any primary, secondary or specialist school students experiencing crisis, such as family violence or sudden financial hardship, to ensure they can continue to travel by public transport.
- Work boots for students enrolled in VET subjects.
- Discount items from direct from their online store, such as:
  - School basics.
  - School shoes.
  - Workwear uniforms.
  - Swimwear.

#### How do I apply?

Requests for assistance are made by the school staff, this could be a principal, wellbeing coordinator, KESO or a teacher. A request can also be made by a support agency.

Ask your school or support service about applying for assistance through the State Schools Relief program.

#### For more information.

-  03 8769 8400
-  [contact@ssr.net.au](mailto:contact@ssr.net.au)
-  <https://stateschoolsrelief.org.au/>
-  1/8 Johnston Court, Dandenong South VIC 3175

## — Opening the doors foundation


Opening the Doors Foundation provides grants to support the extra costs of school, including school uniforms, books, school camps & excursions, IT equipment, stationary and other school associated costs (schools fees and tutoring not included). The fund is open to students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent currently enrolled in a **Catholic or Independent education institution**.


### How do I apply?


Complete the online form below:  
<https://app.openingthedoors.org.au/>  
Applications close: 2nd April 2026

The form can be completed by the student/family, a school support person, or a support worker from another organisation.

### For more information.

 0401 487 414

 [enquiries@openingthedoors.org.au](mailto:enquiries@openingthedoors.org.au)

 <https://www.openingthedoors.org.au/>


## — Les twentyman foundation's back to school program


The Les Twentyman Back to School Program provides educational resources, textbooks, and stationery for young people in **Government, Catholic & Independent schools** experiencing financial difficulty and unstable living conditions.

### How do I apply?

A young person must be referred by their school or a support worker from a 3rd party organization (ie. VACCA, VACSAL, VAEAI, local co-op or health service) and must meet specific criteria to be eligible for the program. First nations students are eligible for assistance through the program. The worker referring should email the full booklist to the program when applying.

### For more information.

 03 9689 4800

 [info@ltfoundation.com.au](mailto:info@ltfoundation.com.au)

 <https://ltfoundation.au/>

## — Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund expenditure (CSEF)

The CSEF provides payments to assist eligible families to cover the costs of camps, sporting activities and excursions.

Payments are made directly to an eligible student's school. Schools must use a CSEF payment only for the eligible student. From 1 January 2026, families eligible for CSEF will see an increase in support to \$400 for primary and secondary school children. Applications for 2026 CSEF support will open from 27 January 2026.

This support is available for **Government schools**.

### How do I apply?

Parents/guardians apply through their child's school; applications for 2026 open January 27, 2026.


### For more information.

 <https://www.vic.gov.au/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund>

## — School Saving Bonus

The specific \$400 School Saving Bonus (SSB) for 2025 is no longer available. Any remaining 2025 bonus funds can still be used for school activities (camps, excursions, events) in 2026, but cannot be combined across different schools.

### For more information.

 <https://www.vic.gov.au/receiving-school-saving-bonus>

## — Aboriginal Co-ops and Organisations.

Reach out to your local Aboriginal Co-op or Organisation. They may be able to provide assistance on a case-by-case basis according to the needs of your family and their available resources.

## — Transport

From 1 January 2026, young people under 18 can travel for free on Victorian public transport with a Youth myki.

- Must be aged 5 to 17 years old,
- use a registered myki account for purchasing online, [Manage your myki - Transport Victoria](#)
- pay \$5.00 for the card, which will be mailed to you, or you can buy it at a train station near you.

## — Sustainable School Shop

BUY & SELL second hand text books, uniforms, calculators, musical instruments, sports gear, Uni books and more.

<https://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au/>

## — The Smith Family Learning for Life

Through Learning for Life, The Smith Family connects students to sponsors whose support helps families by providing students with financial support for school costs, coordinator guidance and access to out-of-school programs

### How do I apply?

Contact your local Learning for Life office.

**Bairnsdale**  
03 5116 1620

**Ballarat**  
0458 716 669  
0428 487 916

**Bendigo**  
0481 911 725

**Brimbank**  
03 9311 2367

**Broadmeadows**  
03 9066 3635

**Lakes Entrance**  
03 5155 5159

**Melbourne**  
03 9473 4300

**Dandenong**  
03 9793 9852

**Epping**  
0466 089 570  
0411 792 879

**Geelong**  
0428 137 622  
0466 474 229

**Morwell**  
03 5133 9065

**Shepparton**  
0466 776 682  
0428 642 164


**Werribee**  
03 9473 4300  
03 9473 4343

# Regional Specific Support

## South-East Victoria

### — Emergency Relief


Through VACCA Dandenong.

 9108 3500

### — Cranbourne Community Information & Support


Provide financial support through their Education Assistance Program.

Only for families located in Hampton Park, Cranbourne, Blind Bight, Cannons Creek, Clyde, Pearcedale, Tooradin, Warneet, Lyndhurst, and Lynbrook. Health care card required.

 <https://ciscranbourne.org.au/education-assistance-program/>

### — Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)

Community benefit fund. Only for Gunai Kurnai people.

 <https://gunaikurnai.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Community-Benefit-Fund-Policy-v4.pdf>

### — Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative (GEGAC)

Can offer limited supports for school uniform, and school supplies, but to utilise funds you must complete and intake and assessment and meet the criteria and be eligible for the programs.

## South-West Victoria

### Goolum Goolum: Back to School Day

Students will receive packs for school, lunch and healthy lunchbox ideas. These events in Stawell and Horsham, are an opportunity for families to learn about Goolum Goolum's support programs for 2025.

#### Horsham

Date: 20 January 2026  
Location: Dalki Guli Hub  
Time: 11am - 2pm

#### Stawell

Date: 22 January 2026  
Location: Goolum Hub  
Time: 11am - 2pm

Please register your child/children's attendance

Contact: Kym Bateson 0447 846 250

## North-West Victoria

### Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS)

Can help existing and current serviced clients/families.

#### For more information.

**Mildura office**  
(03) 5018 4100

**Swanhill office**  
(03) 5032 8600

**Kerang office**  
(03) 5412 6004

### VACSAL - BWAYS Aboriginal Early School Leavers 'Back to School' Program.

VACSAL - BWAYS AESL program supports students from Prep - Year 12 in the **Northern & Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne**. They offer support for families of low-income and single income parents by ensuring that their children receive the best start to their school year. The program is offered from 1st December-1st February each year.

They offer the following support:

- school textbooks ~ referrals to Les Twentyman "Back to School" program
- negotiate with schools regarding payment plans for school fees.
- offer case management to those who wish to receive further support for young people who are at risk of disengagement at school

#### For more information.

Contact Jirrah at VACSAL-BWAYS on 9484 5310

## North-East Victoria

### Ganbina

Can help kids that are already part of the program. Our program is open to all young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, from the age of six to 25 years old. You can join at any time, and it's free.

They offer the following support:

- Help cover school or work related expenses.

#### For more information

☎ 03 5821 7333

✉ [info@ganbina.com.au](mailto:info@ganbina.com.au)