

POLICY

BACK TO SCHOOL PAYMENT SCHEME

Responsibility of: School Operations

Effective Date: December 2014

Next Review Date: September 2015

Target Audience: School staff, school council, parents

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This document should be read in conjunction with **Back to School Payment Scheme Frequently Asked Questions**.

1. POLICY

The Back to School Payment Scheme (the Payment Scheme) provides eligible students with an entitlement to receive educational items in Term one of each school year. Educational items can only be purchased from the eligible student's school.

The Payment Scheme entitlement is to the value of \$150 of eligible goods and services per enrolled student and is redeemable from the school at which the student first attends. Goods and services must assist with educational outcomes:

Entitlement may include Goods and Services such as:	Entitlement cannot be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • textbooks • stationery, including calculators, flash drives, school diaries etc. • uniforms, including hats, book bags etc. • resource hire schemes, excluding refundable deposits • elective subject/material fees • Student ID card • school camps • excursions • elective activities • student photocopying • Year Book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used for voluntary parent contributions, including donations to the school • used for canteen purchases • redeemed for cash, including refunds for purchased goods or services • transferred between students • transferred to another school • returned to parents after Term one if they authorised the funds to be used for activities/items to be purchased in Terms 2-4 • used to purchase goods and services from suppliers other than the school

School Councils can decide the appropriate goods and services to offer to their school community. The goods and services must provide value-for-money and parents/students should be able to take possession of goods redeemed or access equivalent services. Schools cannot use Payment Scheme funds to purchase classroom supplies on behalf of parents/students.

DECS Policy: Back to School Payment Scheme

Some schools, particularly in remote locations may only be able to offer a limited range of goods and services.

Schools must keep a record of the goods and services redeemed by each parent/student. Schools may use the School Record of Payment form or schools can choose another preferred method of record keeping. Schools must provide, on request, a record to parents/student of goods and services redeemed by the parents/student.

Schools must provide an electronic acquittal report 28 calendar days after the end of Term One. The acquittal should include a preschool enrolment estimate for the remainder of the school year. Schools must provide preschool acquittals for preschool students enrolled in Term 2, 3 and 4 by the end of December.

At the commencement of each school year, schools will be funded for the Payment Scheme based on actual enrolment numbers taken from the most current available data collection from the previous year.

Schools will be provided with additional Payment Scheme funding if more enrolments than predicted has resulted in the school providing Payment Scheme entitlement to parents/students than initially funded. Unused payment scheme funding must be returned to the department.

2. BUSINESS NEED

The intent of the Payment Scheme is to help families with the cost of purchasing items that will influence their child's capacity to achieve improved educational outcomes.

3. SCOPE

All students attending Northern Territory Government schools, non-Government schools and home schooled students from preschool to Year 12 are entitled to the Payment Scheme.

The Payment Scheme must be used within the following timeframes:

Student	Payment Scheme must be used by:
Preschool students	Enrolment in any Term within 10 school weeks from commencement date
Transition to Year 12 students	End of Term One

While it is preferred that a parent uses the entitlement, it is acceptable for older students to use the payment scheme with parent permission. However, neither the department, nor the school accepts responsibility if the student uses the entitlement without the parent's permission.

4. DEFINITIONS

Parent: includes the person who has the actual custody of a child or the person with whom a child currently resides.

School council: is a legally formed body established under the Northern Territory *Education Act* with powers to set the broad directions of a school. It is the major governing body of a school and oversees the school's operation.

School Record of Payment form: may be used to keep a record of how much of the \$150 Back to School Payment Scheme entitlement has been redeemed by the parent/student.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (IF APPLICABLE)

Finance Services

Finance Services is responsible for:

- Distributing funds to schools to meet the cost of the Payment Scheme
- Coordinating the acquittal of the Payment Scheme

Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- ensuring the payment scheme is administered at their school in accordance with this policy.
- ensuring that parents/students get value for money for goods and services.
- ensuring that parents/students are provided with a choice of goods and services.
- maintaining appropriate records of payment for the Back to School Payment Scheme.
- providing an electronic acquittal report in the required format within the specified timeframes.

6. RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- Back to School Payment Scheme Record of Payment
- Back to School Payment Scheme Frequently Asked Questions