

Back to school payment scheme – information for parents

What is the Back to school payment scheme?

The Back to school payment scheme (the scheme) is a Northern Territory (NT) Government initiative to assist families with certain school related costs at the beginning of the school year.

How much is the scheme worth?

The scheme entitles families to a payment worth up to \$200 per eligible student in any one school year.

Who is eligible for the scheme?

Students enrolled and attending a NT school are eligible for the scheme. This includes students enrolled at NT Government and non-government schools and NT home-educated students.

Where can the scheme entitlement be used?

The entitlement can only be used at the school the student is enrolled in, and within the timeframe set out in the table on page two of this document. The entitlement cannot be used at, for example, shopping centres, supermarkets or takeaway food outlets.

Schools provide the goods and services that enrolled students may purchase with their entitlement. Parents and students do not need to provide any documentation or any other item to access their entitlement.

What can the scheme be used for?

Entitlement may include goods and services such as:	Entitlement cannot be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Textbooks• Stationery – individual or packaged consumable items such as calculators, USB drives, school diaries, pens, pencils, exercise books etc.• Student ID card• Yearbook• Uniforms – including hats, book bags etc.• Resource hire schemes – not including refundable deposits• School camps• Excursions – including internal and external performances• Elective activities and subject material costs• Tuition fees – non-government schools only.	<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 goods and services purchased under the scheme• Transferred or shared between students• Transferred to another school• Used for classroom or school supplies, for example reams of paper, whiteboard markers and art supplies• Pre-school classroom supplies• Whole school specific activities such as kitchen gardens• Used for reporting or grading software for example Gradexpert, Lexile or PIPS.

School representative bodies can decide the appropriate goods and services on offer to their school community. The goods and services must provide value-for-money and parents and students should be able to take possession of goods up to the value of \$200 or access the equivalent value of services. Schools cannot use the scheme for classroom supplies on behalf of parents or students.

It should be noted that a refund will not be granted where the scheme is used for goods or services which are not available until after term 1, for example, a yearbook in term 4 or a school camp in term 3, if the student leaves the school in term 2 or a scheduled camp is cancelled. However, schools may be able to offer parents alternative goods or services to the same value.

Is there a scheme voucher?

No. It is not necessary for families to produce any documentation in order to use the scheme.

Does the entitlement have an expiry date?

The Back to school payment must be used within the following timeframes:

Student	Payment scheme must be used by:
Preschool students	The end of the term that the student commenced.
Transition to year 12 students	End of term 1.

Can the scheme be used for the following school year if it has a remaining balance?

No. The scheme expires as set out in the table above.

Does the scheme have to be used all at once or, for example, can it be used for something worth \$20 in February and then for something else in March?

The scheme can be used multiple times and at different times to the total value of \$200 as set out in the table above.

Can students use the entitlement?

While it is preferable that a parent or guardian uses the entitlement, it is acceptable for older students to use the scheme for school items with the permission of parents. However, neither the Department of Education nor the school accepts responsibility if the student uses the scheme without the parent's permission.

What happens if the student changes school and the full amount has not been used?

Any balance remaining cannot be transferred to another school. If the student has not accessed any of the entitlement, it can be accessed at the new school within the timeframe set out in the table above.

What happens if the student already has a school uniform, books or stationery? What else can the entitlement be used for?

The entitlement can be used for any essential school item available at the student's school. The school should be contacted to discuss the options available.

What is the School record of payment form?

Schools must keep a record of the goods and services used by each parent and student. Schools may use the School record of payment form or schools can choose another preferred method of record keeping. Schools must provide a record of goods and services used by parents and students on request.

Is the entitlement taxable? Does it have to be claimed as income?

No. The scheme is not taxable and does not need to be included on an income tax statement.

Useful information

Back to school payment scheme policy – [https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/school-communities#back to school payment scheme](https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/school-communities#back_to_school_payment_scheme)