

OFFICIAL

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Department of  
**Education**

## **STUDENT ALLOWANCES GUIDELINES 2026**

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## CONTENTS

1	<b>SECONDARY ASSISTANCE SCHEME</b>	3
1.1	PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCESSION CARD DETAILS	4
1.2	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5
1.2.1	ELIGIBILITY	5
1.2.2	EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOWANCE PAYMENT	5
1.2.3	CLOTHING ALLOWANCE PAYMENT	6
1.3	NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	7
1.3.1	ELIGIBILITY	7
1.3.2	EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOWANCE PAYMENT	7
1.3.3	CLOTHING ALLOWANCE PAYMENT	7
1.4	HOME EDUCATION	8
1.4.1	ELIGIBILITY	8
1.4.2	EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOWANCE PAYMENT	8
1.4.3	CLOTHING ALLOWANCE PAYMENT	8
2	<b>BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE</b>	9
2.1	BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN)	10
2.1.1	ELIGIBILITY	10
2.1.2	PAYMENT	10
2.2	BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE – AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES SPECIAL SUBSIDY	11
2.2.1	ELIGIBILITY	11
2.2.2	PAYMENT	11
2.3	BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE – GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS	12
2.3.1	ELIGIBILITY	12
2.3.2	PAYMENT	12
3	<b>FURTHER INFORMATION</b>	13
4	<b>STUDENT ALLOWANCES AND CONCESSIONS NOT ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</b>	13
4.1	WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT	13
4.1.1	WA GOVERNMENT	13
4.1.1.1	WANSLEA GRANDCARERS SUPPORT SCHEME	13
4.1.2	DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT	13
4.2	AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT	13
4.2.1	SERVICES AUSTRALIA (CENTRELINK)	13
5	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	14
5.1	PARENT/GUARDIAN:	14
6	<b>HISTORY OF CHANGES</b>	14

## SECONDARY ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Western Australian Government, through the Department of Education, provides financial support to eligible parents through the Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS). The aim of this scheme is to assist low-income families with secondary schooling costs.

SAS comprises of two allowances (as per table below):

- Education Program Allowance (EPA); and
- Clothing Allowance.

	<b>Education Program Allowance</b>	<b>Clothing Allowance</b>
<b>PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	\$235 <i>payment to school</i>	\$115 <i>payment to parent/guardian or school</i>
<b>NON GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</b>	\$235 <i>payment to school</i>	\$115 <i>payment to parent/guardian</i>
<b>HOME EDUCATION</b>	\$235 <i>payment to parent/guardian</i>	\$115 <i>payment to parent/guardian</i>

## 1.1

**PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCESSION CARD DETAILS**

A Parent/Guardian may apply for the Secondary Assistance Scheme if they hold one of the following cards:

- Services Australia (Centrelink) Pensioner Concession Card,
- Services Australia (Centrelink) Health Care Card, or
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card (TPI and gold cards cannot be accepted as they are issued for medical benefit purposes only and not income tested).

Cards must meet the following requirements:

- Valid for a period of no less than four weeks.
- Valid at the time of SAS application (cannot use an expired concession card to apply for SAS).
- Valid sometime within Term 1 (2 February 2026 – 2 April 2026).
  - For applicants who have arrived from overseas and applying throughout the year, the card must be current at the time of application. Application for the Secondary Assistance Scheme must be made within one month of enrolling at the school, or two months for extenuating circumstances (e.g. Centrelink processing concession card).
  - For interstate applicants, the card must be valid sometime within Term 1.
- Students must be listed on parent/guardian concession card.
- Years 11 and 12 students may not be listed on the parent/guardian concession card. In these circumstances, both the parent/guardian concession card and student concession card must be produced to prove eligibility.

Applications must be completed annually in Term 1 (an application does not automatically cover all secondary school years).

Independent students may also apply using their own Centrelink Health Care Card when declared independent by Centrelink (e.g. living away from home). In this instance, a letter of confirmation of independence status from Centrelink is to accompany the application.

Where a student, meeting all other SAS eligibility, is in receipt of the Centrelink Parent Payment, the student is deemed an adult (as they are now responsible for a child) and must complete the application form as both parent and student.

## 1.2 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Secondary Assistance Scheme applications for parents/guardians with students enrolled at public schools must be obtained from the school. Applications completed prior to the start of Term 1, 2026 cannot be submitted to the Department until the commencement of Term 1 to confirm the student's enrolment and attendance at the school.

Applications must be completed annually at the school or emailed to the school in Term 1 (an application does not automatically cover all secondary school years). If applying via email, applicants must also email a copy of both sides of the applicable concession card with the application to the school.

### 1.2.1 ELIGIBILITY

To claim the public schools Secondary Assistance Scheme allowance, an applicant must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- The Parent/Guardian holds an eligible concession card and the student/s being claimed is/are listed on the card. (Refer to section 1.1 for exceptions)
- The student is enrolled in Years 7 to 12, attending and studying a full-time secondary course in a Western Australian public school, where education program charges and/or voluntary contributions apply.
- Applicants may be eligible up to and including the year the student turns 18 i.e. not eligible if born in 2007 or before.
- The applicant must not have previously received the allowance for the same student enrolled at another school in the same year.
- The allowance for the student has not previously been claimed by another parent/guardian in the same year.
- Students who have their own Health Care Card and are financially dependent on their parent/guardian may not apply (the application is to be made by the parent/guardian only unless the student is declared independent by Centrelink). (Refer to section 1.1).
- The applicant is not a foster parent. Foster parents cannot apply as the child is a Child in Care of the Department of Communities Child Protection, which is responsible for all associated costs.

### 1.2.2 EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOWANCE PAYMENT

An amount of \$235 will be paid to the school for eligible parents/guardians of students in Years 7 to 12. Payments are made to schools in the April gateway and subsequent gateways as appropriate. Other payments (e.g. applications for overseas and interstate applicants made later in the school year) will be made as appropriate.

When a student enrols at another school after the commencement of the school year, the school will transfer the unused portion to the new school through specific arrangements with parents and the schools concerned.

The Education Program Allowance (EPA) will be paid directly to the school and in the first instance, will be applied towards education program charges. If the education program charges are less than \$235, the difference will be applied to the voluntary contribution for Years 7 to 10, or as negotiated with the parent/guardian for Years 11 to 12.

Applications submitted for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol during the year after Term 1 will receive a pro-rata Education Program Allowance payment of \$58.75 per term enrolled.

### 1.2.3 CLOTHING ALLOWANCE PAYMENT

Claimants who satisfy the eligibility criteria will receive payment of \$115. Where parents nominate the Clothing Allowance be paid directly to them, bank account details must be provided on the Secondary Assistance Scheme application form. Alternatively, parents can nominate the Clothing Allowance be paid directly to the school, to be applied towards uniforms, the voluntary contribution, charges, voluntary approved requests or personal items.

If the student leaves the school during the year, any remaining unused clothing allowance funds can be forwarded to the new Western Australian school or refunded to the parent. Parents must be consulted on the treatment of the remaining funds.

Claimants that submit applications for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol during the year will receive the full \$115 Clothing Allowance.

## 1.3 NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Secondary Assistance Scheme applications for parents/guardians with students enrolled at non-government schools must be obtained from the school. Applications completed prior to the start of Term 1, 2026 must not be submitted to the Department of Education until the commencement of Term 1 to confirm the student's enrolment and attendance at the school.

Applications must be completed annually at the school or emailed to the school in Term 1 (an application does not automatically cover all secondary school years). If applying via email, applicants must also email a copy of both sides of the applicable concession card with the application to the school.

### 1.3.1 ELIGIBILITY

To claim the non-government schools Secondary Assistance Scheme allowance, an applicant must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- The Parent/Guardian holds an eligible concession card and the student/s being claimed is/are listed on the card. (Refer to section 1.1 for exceptions)
- The student is enrolled in Years 7 to 12, attending and studying a full-time secondary course at a Western Australian non-government school.
- Applicants may be eligible up to and including the year the student turns 18 i.e. not eligible if born in 2007 or before.
- The applicant must not have previously received the allowance for the same student enrolled at another school in the same year.
- The allowance for the student has not previously been claimed by another parent/guardian in the same year.
- Students who have their own Health Care Card and are financially dependent on their parent/guardian may not apply (the application is to be made by the parent/guardian only, unless the student is declared independent by Centrelink). (Refer to section 1.1).
- The applicant is not a foster parent. Foster parents cannot apply as the child is a Child in Care of the Department of Communities Child Protection, which is responsible for all associated costs.

### 1.3.2 EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOWANCE PAYMENT

An amount of \$235 will be paid to the school for eligible applicants with students in Years 7 to 12.

When a student enrols at another Western Australian school after the commencement of the school year, the school will transfer the unused portion to the new school through specific arrangements with parents and the schools concerned.

Applications submitted for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol after Term 1 will receive a pro-rata Education Program Allowance payment of \$58.75 per term enrolled.

### 1.3.3 CLOTHING ALLOWANCE PAYMENT

Claimants who satisfy the eligibility criteria will receive payment of \$115. Parents are required to supply their bank account details on the Secondary Assistance Scheme application form to obtain the Clothing Allowance payment.

Claimants that submit applications for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol during the year will receive the full \$115 Clothing Allowance.

## 1.4 HOME EDUCATION

The Secondary Assistance Scheme is available to parents/guardians holding eligible concession cards (Refer to section 1.1) providing home education for students studying Years 7 to 12 and of Year 7 to 12 school age.

Applicants must obtain Secondary Assistance Scheme applications from Home Education Moderators at their Education Regional Office.

Applications must be completed annually and posted or emailed in Term 1 (an application does not automatically cover all secondary school years). Applicants must also provide a copy of both sides of the applicable concession card with the application to the department.

### 1.4.1 ELIGIBILITY

To claim the Home Education Secondary Assistance Scheme allowance, an applicant must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- The Parent/Guardian holds an eligible concession card (see 1.1).
- The applicant is providing home education for students studying Years 7 to 12 and of Year 7 to 12 school age.
- Applicants may be eligible up to and including the year the student turns 18 i.e. not eligible if born in 2007 or before.
- A letter of registration from the Education Regional Office stating that home education is approved for the current year must be submitted with the application form.
- Applicants must not have previously received the allowance for the same student in 2026.
- The allowance for the student has not previously been claimed by another parent/guardian in the same year.
- The applicant is not a foster parent. Foster parents cannot apply as the child is a Child in Care of the Department of Communities Child Protection, which is responsible for all associated costs.

### 1.4.2 EDUCATION PROGRAM ALLOWANCE PAYMENT

Applicants who satisfy the eligibility criteria will receive a payment of \$235. Parents must supply their bank account details on the Secondary Assistance Scheme application form to obtain the Education Program Allowance payment.

### 1.4.3 CLOTHING ALLOWANCE PAYMENT

Applicants who satisfy the eligibility criteria will receive payment of \$115. Parents must supply their bank account details on the Secondary Assistance Scheme application form to obtain the Clothing Allowance payment.

## BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE

The Western Australian Government, through the Department of Education, provides financial support to eligible parents through the Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA). BAHA is available to parents/guardians of isolated children, students attending agricultural colleges and students required to board in order to enrol in gifted and talented programs (as per below table).

Boarding Away from Home Allowance type	Primary Eligibility	Payment (up to \$1,461)
<b>FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/guardian receives AIC*</li> </ul>	Pro-rata based on the number of terms attended
<b>AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES SPECIAL SUBSIDY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/guardian does not receive AIC*</li> <li>• Student attends WA Agricultural College</li> </ul>	Pro-rata based on the number of terms attended
<b>GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/guardian does not receive AIC*</li> <li>• Student boards at Albany or City Beach Residential College</li> </ul>	Pro-rata based on the number of terms attended

\* The Australian Government Services Australia (Centrelink) Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance or Second Home Allowance

## **2.1 BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE (FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN)**

This allowance assists families in isolated locations who do not have access to a primary or secondary school, with boarding costs.

The application forms are available on the Department's website and will be available at the boarding facility. They must be completed for each school year the student resides at a boarding facility. Parents/Guardians who receive the Second Home Allowance can contact the Financial Planning and Resourcing Directorate for the application form.

The closing date for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance applications (for isolated children) is 27 November 2026. All completed Boarding Away from Home Allowance applications should be posted or emailed to the Allowances Coordinator, Financial Planning and Resourcing Directorate.

Applications must be completed annually (an application does not automatically cover all school years).

### **2.1.1 ELIGIBILITY**

The Boarding Away from Home Allowance is only available to resident Western Australians who have qualified for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance or Second Home Allowance (which is available from Centrelink). More information about the AIC can be obtained by telephoning Centrelink on 13 23 18.

The student must be enrolled in a Western Australian primary or secondary school (Kindergarten to Year 12).

### **2.1.2 PAYMENT**

The allowance for 2026 is \$1,461 for students who board away for the full year, with payment being made at the end of Term 4. Where a student only boards for part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms boarded.

The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four weeks for a pro-rata payment.

The payment will be sent directly to the boarding provider where the student attends a public Residential College (i.e. Albany, Broome, City Beach, Esperance, Geraldton, Merredin, Narrogin, Northam or Moora; or where a student attends a public Western Australian College of Agriculture (i.e. Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa, Narrogin) and is to be deducted from the residential accommodation fees only.

If the student does not board at a public Residential College or Western Australian College of Agriculture then the allowance is paid to one of the following as nominated by the applicant: the boarding facility, school or parent. Where applicants nominate the allowance be paid directly to them, bank account details must be provided on the application form. If the allowance is paid directly to the school, then it is to be deducted from the residential boarding fees only.

## 2.2 BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE – AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES SPECIAL SUBSIDY

This allowance is to assist parents with secondary students attending and boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture, with boarding costs.

Claimants apply for the subsidy through the Western Australian College of Agriculture where the student is boarding. The college provides application forms to applicants and payment will be made directly to the Agricultural College in October 2026.

The closing date for the Agricultural College Special Subsidy Boarding Away from Home Allowance is 31 July 2026. Application forms should be submitted directly to the Agricultural College the student attends.

Applications must be completed annually (an application does not automatically cover all school years).

### 2.2.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Student is enrolled and boarding at a Western Australian Catholic Agricultural College or
- Student is enrolled and boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture.

Parent/student is not in receipt of:

- Youth Allowance at the away from home rate;
- AIC Allowance from Centrelink; or
- ABSTUDY (if full boarding paid by Centrelink).

**Note:** This allowance is only available to students boarding at the Agricultural Colleges. If students are boarding at another location, they are not entitled to claim this special subsidy (they may be eligible for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance for Isolated Children if they are in receipt of AIC Boarding Allowance or Second Home Allowance from Centrelink).

### 2.2.2 PAYMENT

The Allowance for 2026 is \$1,461. The payment will be sent directly to each Agricultural College and it is to be deducted from the residential accommodation fees only.

If a student only boards at a Western Australian College of Agriculture (public or non-government) for part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms attended.

The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four weeks for a pro-rata payment.

## 2.3 BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCE – GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS

This allowance is to assist rural and remote families with boarding costs for secondary students enrolled in gifted and talented programs at public schools and boarding at Albany or City Beach Residential College.

Claimants apply for the subsidy through the Albany or City Beach Residential College where the student is boarding. The college provides application forms to applicants and payment will be made directly to Albany or City Beach Residential College in October 2026.

The closing date for the Gifted and Talented Programs Boarding Away from Home Allowance is 31 July 2026. Application forms should be submitted directly to Albany or City Beach Residential College.

Applications must be completed annually (an application does not automatically cover all school years).

### 2.3.1 ELIGIBILITY

- Student is enrolled in a gifted and talented program at a public school; and
- Student is boarding at Albany or City Beach Residential College.

Parent/student is not in receipt of:

- Youth Allowance at the away from home rate;
- AIC Allowance from Centrelink; or
- ABSTUDY (if full boarding paid by Centrelink).

**Note:** This allowance is only available to students boarding at the Albany or City Beach Residential College. If students are boarding at another location, they are not entitled to claim this special subsidy (they may be eligible for the Boarding Away from Home Allowance for Isolated Children, if they are in receipt of AIC Boarding Allowance or Second Home Allowance from Centrelink).

### 2.3.2 PAYMENT

The Allowance for 2026 is \$1,461. The payment will be sent directly to the Albany or City Beach Residential College and it is to be deducted from the residential accommodation fees only.

If a student only boards at the Albany or City Beach Residential College for part of the year, a pro-rata payment will be made based on the number of terms attended.

The minimum stay with a boarding provider is four weeks for a pro-rata payment.

### 3 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the above allowances can be obtained by contacting:

Financial Planning and Resourcing Directorate  
 Department of Education  
 151 Royal Street  
 East Perth WA 6004

Telephone: (08) 9264 4516  
 Email: [student.allowances@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:student.allowances@education.wa.edu.au)

### 4 STUDENT ALLOWANCES AND CONCESSIONS NOT ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(This information is only current at time of publishing and is subject to change.)

#### 4.1 WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

##### 4.1.1 WA GOVERNMENT

Information on concessions and rebates is available on the WA government website.

**Web:** [www.wa.gov.au](http://www.wa.gov.au)

##### 4.1.1.1 WANSLEA GRANDCARERS SUPPORT SCHEME

Wanslea administer the Grandcarers support scheme on behalf of the Department of Communities

**Web:** <https://www.wanslea.org.au/programs/grandcarers-support-scheme>

Ph 1800 794 909 (9am – 4.00pm Monday to Friday)

##### 4.1.2 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

The Student Travel Subsidy Scheme provides assistance to students travelling from a geographical area known as the Defined Remote Area (DRA) to attend school or university, regardless of whether there is an educational facility locally available.

**Web:** <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/aboutus/student-travel-subsidies.asp>

Phone: 1300 660 147

#### 4.2 AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

##### 4.2.1 SERVICES AUSTRALIA (CENTRELINK)

**Web:** <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/centrelink>

Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Phone: 132 318

ABSTUDY Phone: 1800 132 317

Youth Allowance Phone: 132 490

## 5 DEFINITIONS

### 5.1 PARENT/GUARDIAN:

In relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility –  
 (a) for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or  
 (b) for the day to day care, welfare and development of the child.

## 6 HISTORY OF CHANGES

Effective Date	Last update date	Version no.	TRIM no.	Notes
5 October 2017		1.0	D16/0664195	2017 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2018 school year.</li><li>• 2018 term dates.</li><li>• Parent/Guardian definition.</li><li>• BAHA payment amount.</li><li>• Wanslea Grandcarers Support Scheme.</li><li>• History of Changes table.</li><li>• Removed reference to Country High Schools Hostel Authority.</li><li>• Removal of Year 7 Special Case Consideration.</li></ul>
15 December 2017	24 November 2017	1.1	D17/0443651	BAHA for Isolated Children updated in line with current Centrelink AIC Guidelines
1 January 2020	1 October 2018	1.0	D18/0440435	2018 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2019 school year.</li><li>• 2019 term dates.</li><li>• Private schools now referred to a Non-Government schools.</li><li>• BAHA payment amount.</li><li>• History of Changes table.</li></ul>
1 January 2020	1 October 2019	1.0	D19/0388193	2019 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2020 school year.</li><li>• 2020 term dates.</li><li>• BAHA payment amount, removal of BAHA Respite.</li><li>• Updated Department of Education logo</li><li>• History of Changes table</li><li>• ConcessionsWA web address updated.</li></ul>
20 May 2020	20 May 2020	1.0	D19/033193	2020 Guidelines updated to include SAS extension – now able to apply in Term 1 and 2, closure date is 3 July 2020, card can be eligible up to 3 July 2020.

1 January 2021	1 October 2020	1.0	D20/0442376	2020 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 school year &amp; term dates</li> <li>• Department of Human Services (Centrelink) change of name Services Australia (Centrelink)</li> <li>• Concession card cannot be used if expired in SAS section</li> <li>• BAHAs payment amount</li> <li>• History of Changes table</li> </ul>
31 July 2021	30 August	1.0	D21/0377785	2021 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2022 school year &amp; term dates</li> <li>• BAHAs payment amount and closing dates</li> <li>• Albany Residential College added to Gifted and Talented programs</li> <li>• URL address (link) for Interpreters Services removed</li> <li>• History of Changes table</li> <li>• ABSTUDY Boarding changed to ABSTUDY</li> </ul>
13 July 2022	1 October 2021	1.0	D22/0536773	2022 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023 school year &amp; term dates</li> <li>• BAHAs payment amount increasing to \$1,350</li> <li>• BAHAs closing dates</li> <li>• History of Changes table</li> <li>• Residential boarding fee changed to Residential accommodation fee</li> </ul>
1 January 2024	25 October 2023	1.0	D23/1461439	2023 Guidelines updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024 school year &amp; term dates</li> <li>• Change to allocation of the EPA payment for Public Schools</li> <li>• Acceptance of emailed applications for schools &amp; home schooling applications</li> <li>• Department of Education to witness Home Schooling applications (must email front and back of concession card)</li> <li>• BAHAs payment amount increasing to \$1,389</li> <li>• BAHAs closing dates</li> <li>• History of Changes Table</li> </ul>
1 January 2025	13 October 2024	1.0	D24/0445450	2024 Guidelines updated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025 school year &amp; term dates</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary increase to Clothing Allowance payment amount for 2025 school year</li> <li>• Removal of the ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance and associated change to SAS eligibility criteria</li> <li>• BAHA payment amount increased to \$1,424</li> <li>• BAHA closing dates</li> <li>• History of Changes Table</li> <li>• ConcessionsWA web address updated</li> <li>• Change of terminology relating to non-government schools, Australian government and WA government.</li> </ul>
1 January 2026	13 October 2025	1.0		<p>Guidelines updated to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2026 school year &amp; term dates</li> <li>• Removal of temporary increase to clothing allowance payment</li> <li>• BAHA payment amount and closing date</li> <li>• Public School eligibility change to only public schools where education program charges apply.</li> <li>• History of Changes Table</li> </ul>