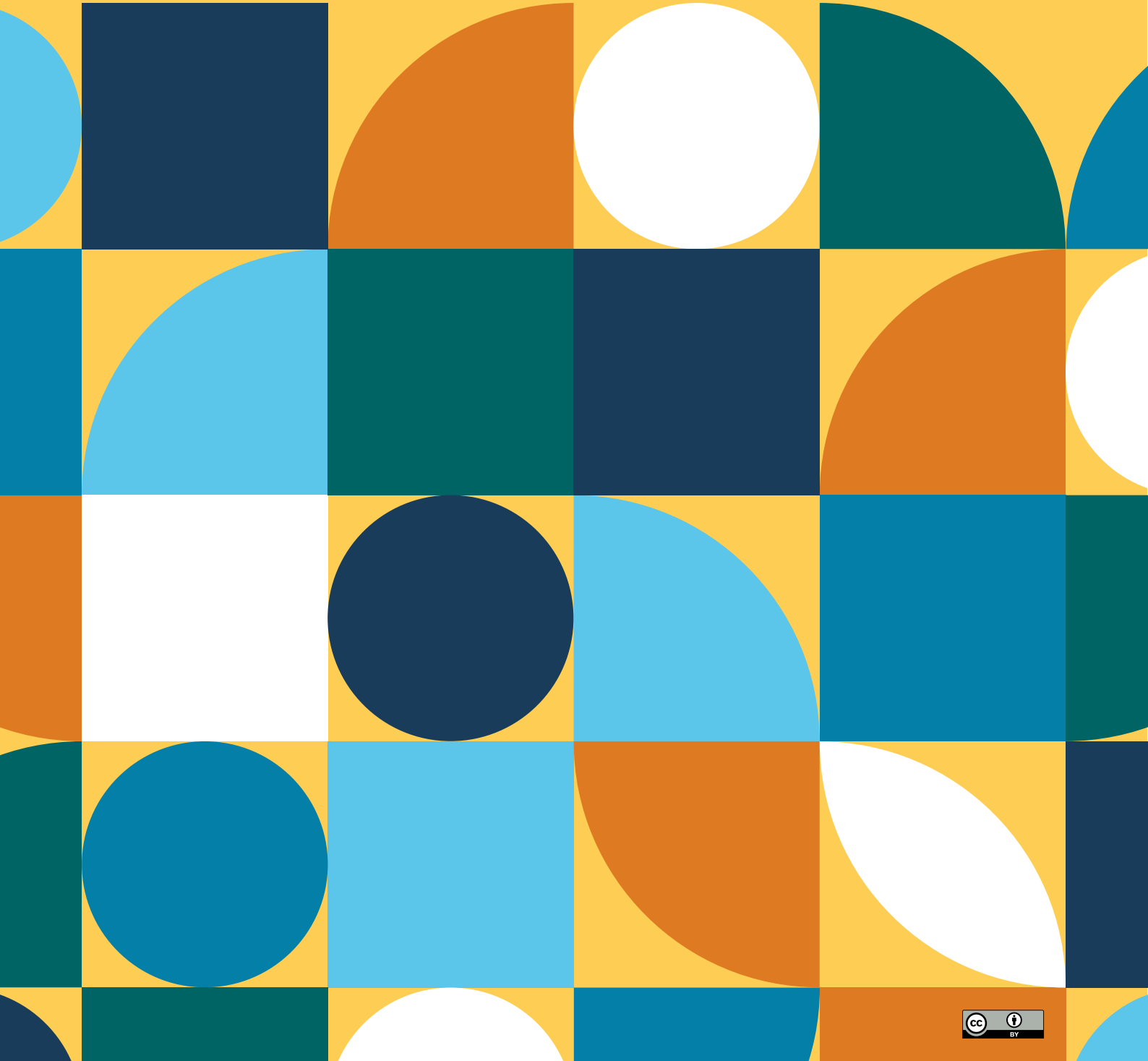
Department of Education

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Learning changes lives

Student Allowances Guidelines

Effective 1 January 2027



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Contents

Secondary Assistance Scheme 2

Eligibility 2

Parent/guardian concession card details 3

SAS - Public Schools 4

Applications 4
Education Program Allowance Payment 4
Clothing Allowance Payment 4

SAS - Non-Government Schools 5

Applications 5
Education Program Allowance Payment 5
Clothing Allowance Payment 5

SAS - Home Education 6

Applications 6
Education Program Allowance Payment 6
Clothing Allowance Payment 6

Boarding Away from Home Allowance 7

BAHA for Isolated Children 8

Applications 8
Eligibility 8
Payment 8
Verification of Centrelink AIC boarding or second home eligibility 8

BAHA - Agricultural Colleges Special Subsidy 9

Applications 9
Eligibility 9
Payment 9

BAHA - Gifted and Talented Program 10

Applications 10
Eligibility 10
Payment 10

Definitions of terms used in these guidelines 11

Collection notice 11

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 is available to families with students enrolled in public or non-government schools or registered in home education.

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

- Education Program Allowance (EPA)
- Clothing Allowance.

Applications for SAS close on the last day of Term 1.

Applications for SAS must be submitted annually.

	Education Program Allowance	Clothing Allowance
Public Schools	$235 payment to school	$115 payment to parent/guardian or school
Non-Government Schools	$235 payment to school	$115 payment to parent/guardian
Home Education	$235 payment to parent/guardian	$115 payment to parent/guardian

Eligibility

To apply for the Secondary Assistance Scheme, an applicant must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- The Parent/Guardian holds an eligible concession card and the applicable students are listed on the card (refer to Parent/Guardian concession card details for exceptions).
- The student is enrolled in Years 7 to 12, attending and studying a full-time secondary course in a Western Australian school where education program charges and/or voluntary contributions apply, or registered in home schooling.
- Students are eligible up to and including the year they turn 18. In 2027, students are not eligible if born in 2008 or before.
- Only one application per student can be accepted in the same year. An application for the student must not have been processed in the same year from a different school or parent.
- Students who have their own Health Care Card may only apply if they have been deemed independent by Centrelink (refer to Independent Students).
- 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.

Applications meeting the eligibility requirements will be accepted and will be entitled to receive both the Education Program Allowance and Clothing Allowance.

Parent/guardian concession card details

A parent/guardian may apply for the Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS) if they hold one of the following cards:

- Services Australia (Centrelink) Pensioner Concession Card
- Services Australia (Centrelink) Health Care Card
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Pensioner Concession Card (blue card only).

The above Centrelink Concession cards are accepted as they are means tested by Services Australia (Centrelink).

The DVA Pensioner Concession card is accepted as it is means tested by the Department of Veteran's Affairs. Other Veterans' cards cannot be accepted as they are issued for medical benefit purposes only and not income tested.

The concession card 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 for some time within Term 1 (1 February 2027 – 9 April 2027)
- Students must be listed on parent/guardian concession card.

Exceptions

- Concession cards from applicants arriving from overseas and applying after the closing date must be current at the time of application. Applications must be made within one month of enrolling at the school, or two months for extenuating circumstances (e.g. Centrelink processing concession card).
- Concession card for applicants arriving from interstate must be valid for some time within Term 1.
- Where students are not listed on the parent/guardian concession card as they have their own concession card, both the parent/guardian concession card and student concession card must be produced to prove eligibility.

Independent Students

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

Where a student, meeting all other SAS eligibility, is in receipt of the Centrelink Parenting Payment, the student is deemed an adult and must complete the application form as both parent and student.

SAS - Public Schools

Applications

- Applications must meet the eligibility criteria.
- SAS applications for parents/guardians with students enrolled at public schools must be obtained from the school.
- Applicants must use the correct public schools form and must be submitted to the school on or prior to the closing date. Applications cannot be submitted directly to the Department.
- Applications completed prior to the start of Term 1, 2027 cannot be submitted by the school to the Department until the commencement of Term 1 to confirm the student's enrolment and attendance at the school.
- Applications must be submitted annually 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 to prove eligibility.
- Schools must review applications for completeness and confirm eligibility is met before submitting the application to the Department for processing.

Education Program Allowance Payment

The Education Program Allowance (EPA) of $235 is payable to the student's school as identified on the application form. The EPA payments are made in bulk to schools following the processing of applications received to the end of Term 1 in the April gateway. The EPA for applications processed after this time will be paid in subsequent gateways.

When a student transfers to another school after the SAS application has been processed, the school will transfer the unused portion to the new Western Australian school through specific arrangements agreed with parents and the schools concerned.

In the first instance, the EPA 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 for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol after Term 1 will be eligible for a pro-rata EPA payment of $58.75 per term enrolled.

Clothing Allowance Payment

The clothing allowance payment of $115 may be paid directly to the parent's bank account or to the school identified on the application form. Where applicants nominate the clothing allowance be paid directly to them, bank account details must be provided on the SAS application form. Parents/guardians may use these funds flexibly toward their student's schooling costs.

Alternatively, parents can nominate the clothing allowance be paid directly to the school, which can be applied towards any charges on the student account including uniforms, voluntary contributions, education program charges or school events.

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 clothing allowance funds.

Applications for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol after Term 1 will be eligible for the full $115 clothing allowance.

SAS - Non-Government Schools

Applications

- Applications must meet the eligibility criteria.
- SAS applications for parents/guardians with students enrolled at non-government schools must be obtained from the school.
- Applicants must use the correct non-government schools form and must be submitted to the school on or prior to the closing date.
- Applications completed prior to the start of Term 1, 2027 cannot be submitted by the school to the Department until the commencement of Term 1 to confirm the student's enrolment and attendance at the school.
- Applications must be submitted annually 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 to prove eligibility.
- Schools must review applications for completeness and confirm eligibility is met before submitting the application to the Department for processing.

Education Program Allowance Payment

The Education Program Allowance (EPA) of $235 is payable to the student's school as identified on the application form. The EPA payments are made in bulk to schools following the processing of applications received to the end of Term 1 in May. The EPA for applications processed after this time will be paid subsequently.

When a student transfers to another Western Australian school after the SAS application has been processed, the school will transfer the unused portion to the new school through specific arrangements with parents and the schools concerned.

Applications for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol after Term 1 will be eligible for a pro-rata EPA payment of $58.75 per term enrolled.

Clothing Allowance Payment

The clothing allowance payment of $115 will be paid directly to the parent's bank account provided on the SAS application form. Parents/guardians may use these funds flexibly toward their student's schooling costs.

Applications for students who have transferred from interstate or arrived from overseas who enrol after Term 1 will be eligible for the full $115 clothing allowance.

SAS - Home Education

Applications

- Applications must meet the eligibility criteria.
- SAS applications for parents/guardians with students registered for home education must be obtained from the local education regional office or the Department of Education Home Education website.
- SAS can only be claimed for students studying Years 7 to 12 and of Years 7 to 12 school age.
- Applications must use the correct home education form and must be submitted to the Department prior to the closing date.
- Applications must be submitted annually to the Department after the commencement of Term 1 (an application does not automatically cover all secondary school years).
- Applications must include proof that the applicant and student are registered for Home Education.
- If applying via email, applicants must also email a copy of both sides of the applicable concession card with the application.

Education Program Allowance Payment

The Education Program Allowance of $235 will be paid directly to eligible applicants to the bank account provided on their application form.

Clothing Allowance Payment

The Clothing Allowance of $115 will be paid directly to eligible applicants to the bank account provided on their application form.

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 $1,508)
For Isolated Children	• Parent/Guardian receives AIC*	Pro-rata based on the number of terms boarding
Agriculture Colleges Special Subsidy	• Parent/Guardian does not receive AIC* • Student attends and boards at a WA Agricultural College	Pro-rata based on the number of terms boarding
Gifted and Talented Programs	• Parent/Guardian does not receive AIC* • Student is enrolled in a gifted and talented program at a WA public school • Student boards at Albany or City Beach Residential College	Pro-rata based on the number of terms boarding

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

BAHA - Isolated Children

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

Applications

The application forms:

- are available from early January on the Department's website, from the boarding provider, or from the Department
- must be completed for each school year the student resides at a boarding facility or second home and meets the eligibility requirements
- must be submitted via email or post to the Department by 26 November 2027.

Eligibility

To apply for BAHA for Isolated Children, applicants and/or students must:

- be a permanent resident of Western Australia
- board or live away from their primary residence to attend school
- qualify for the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Boarding Allowance or Second Home Allowance (provided through Services Australia (Centrelink))
- be the same parent or guardian who is receiving Centrelink AIC
- be enrolled in a Western Australian primary or secondary school (Kindergarten to Year 12).

Payment

The allowance for 2027 is $1,508 for students who board for the full year, with payment being made at the end of Term 4, following their boarding confirmation. 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.

Payments will be directed as follows:

- Students boarding at a public Residential College or Western Australian College of Agriculture: Directly to the boarding provider.
- Students boarding elsewhere: As nominated on the application form either directly to the parent or to the boarding provider.

Payments made to boarding providers should be applied to residential boarding fees.

Verification of Centrelink AIC boarding or second home eligibility

Applicants for BAHA for Isolated Children must confirm they meet the Centrelink eligibility criteria by providing a copy of a valid entitlement letter from Centrelink showing evidence that they are in receipt of the AIC Boarding Allowance or Second Home Allowance for the current year, for the student named on the BAHA application form.

BAHA - Agricultural Colleges Special Subsidy

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

This allowance is only available to students boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture. 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.

Applications

The application forms:

- are available through the relevant Western Australian College of Agriculture from January
- must be completed annually for each school year the student resides at the Western Australian College of Agriculture
- must be submitted to the Western Australian College of Agriculture by 30 July 2027 (unless student enrols after this date).

Eligibility

To apply for BAHA – Agricultural Colleges Special Subsidy, students must be:

- enrolled and boarding at a Western Australian College of Agriculture.

Parent/student must not be in receipt of any of the following from the Australian Government Services Australia (Centrelink):

- Youth Allowance at the living away from home rate
- AIC Allowance
- ABSTUDY boarding payment.

If a student is “in care” the foster parent is not eligible to claim, as the Department of Communities is responsible for all associated costs.

Payment

The allowance for 2027 is $1,508. The payment will be sent directly to each Western Australian College of Agriculture in October and is to be deducted from the residential accommodation fees only.

If a student only boards 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.

BAHA - Gifted and Talented Program

This allowance is to assist regional 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.

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.

Applications

The application forms:

- are available through the Albany or City Beach Residential College from January
- must be completed annually for each school year the student resides at either Albany or City Beach Residential College
- must be submitted to the relevant Residential College by 30 July 2027 (unless student enrols after this date).

Eligibility

To apply for BAHA – Gifted and Talented Program, students must be:

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

Parent/student must not be in receipt of any of the following from the Australian Government Services Australia (Centrelink):

- Youth Allowance at the living away from home rate
- AIC Allowance
- ABSTUDY boarding payment.

If a student is “in care” the foster parent is not eligible to claim, as the Department of Communities is responsible for all associated costs.

Payment

The Allowance for 2027 is $1,508. The payment will be sent directly to each Residential College in October and is to be deducted from the residential accommodation fees only.

If a student only boards 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.

Definitions of terms used in these guidelines

Parent/Guardian: In relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility:

- for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or
- for the day to day care, welfare and development of the child.

Department: Department of Education (Western Australia)

Public Residential Colleges: Albany, Broome, City Beach, Esperance, Geraldton, Merredin, Moora, Narrogin and/or Northam Residential Colleges, managed by the Department.

Western Australian College of Agriculture: Cunderdin, Denmark, Harvey, Morawa and/or Narrogin, managed by the Department.

Collection notice

The Department of Education collects personal information, including name, address, Centrelink reference number, student details and bank account information on the application form for the purpose of determining eligibility and processing applications for the Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS) and Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA). Information provided as part of a SAS or BAHA application will not be shared or disclosed for any other purpose.

Claims made via a paper form will be transferred into the Department's SAS or BAHA system. SAS claims for public schools may be transferred into the school finance system and electronically transferred in bulk to the Department to the SAS system. Information in the SAS and BAHA systems can only be accessed by authorised officers in the Department. For approved applications, names and bank account information will be provided to the Commonwealth Bank for the purpose of making the payment to the applicant's bank account.

If applicants do not provide the information required on the application forms, they may not be eligible for the SAS or BAHA. Applicants may request a copy of their application by contacting their school or the Department's Allowances Co-ordinator.

Applications received at schools or by the Department will be stored securely and in line with the *State Records Act 2000* (WA) and the Department's Records Management policy. Personal information from the application forms will be only stored in Department databases within Australia.

The Department is committed to protecting the privacy of personal and health information it collects, holds, manages, uses, discloses and shares, in accordance with relevant legislation and policies, in the fulfilment of its functions and activities. All personal information will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024*. For more information, visit www.education.wa.edu.au/privacy.