

# Back to School Payment Scheme

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Back to School Payment Scheme?

The Back to School Payment Scheme was initiated by the Northern Territory Government to help families offset the beginning of year expenses for students.

### How much is the entitlement worth?

The Back to School Payment Scheme entitles families up to the value of \$150 per eligible student.

### Who is eligible for the Back to School Payment Scheme?

Students enrolled and attending a Northern Territory (NT) school are eligible for the Back to School Payment Scheme. This includes students enrolled at NT Government and non-government schools and NT home-educated students.

### Where can the Back to School Payment Scheme entitlement be used?

The entitlement for students enrolled in NT schools can only be used through the school the student first attends at the beginning of the school year. The entitlement cannot be used at shopping centres, supermarkets, takeaway food outlets, etc.

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

### What can the Back to School Payment Scheme be used for?

Entitlement may include goods and services such as:	Entitlement cannot be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• textbooks</li> <li>• stationery including calculators, flash drives, school diaries, etc.</li> <li>• uniforms including hats, book bags, etc.</li> <li>• resource hire schemes, excluding refundable deposits</li> <li>• elective subject/material fees</li> <li>• student identification card</li> <li>• school camps</li> <li>• excursions</li> <li>• elective activities</li> <li>• student photocopying</li> <li>• year book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• used for voluntary parent contributions, including donations to the school</li> <li>• used for canteen purchases</li> <li>• redeemed for cash, including refunds for purchased goods</li> <li>• transferred between students</li> <li>• transferred to another school</li> <li>• returned to parents after Term 1 if they authorised the funds to be used for activities/items to be purchased in Terms 2 to 4</li> <li>• used to purchase goods and services from suppliers other than the school</li> </ul>

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 up to the value of \$150 or access the equivalent value of services. Schools cannot use the payment scheme for classroom supplies on behalf of parents/students.

It should be noted that a refund will not be granted where the entitlement is used for goods or services which are not available until after Term 1 (e.g. a year book 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.

**Is there a Back to School Payment Scheme voucher?**

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

**Does the entitlement have an expiry date?**

The Back to School Payment must be used within the following timeframes:

<b>Student</b>	<b>Payment Scheme must be used by:</b>
Preschool students	The end of the term that the student commenced
Transition to Year 12 students	End of Term 1

**Can the Back to School Payment Scheme entitlement be used for the following school year if it has a remaining balance?**

No. The Back to School Payment Scheme entitlements expire as set out in the table above.

**Does the entitlement 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 entitlement can be used multiple times and at different times to the total value of \$150 as set out in the table above.

**Can students use the entitlement?**

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

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

The entitlement – or the balance remaining – is not transferable to other schools. The \$150 entitlement must be used at the school where the student first enrolled and attended in Term 1.

**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/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/students on request.

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

No. The Back to School Payment Scheme is not taxable and does not need to be included on an income tax statement.