



## Education Maintenance Allowance - information for parents currently receiving EMA

### Changes to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 2013:

The EMA continues to help families on lower incomes with financial assistance to cover the cost of educational expenses including **textbooks, stationery, uniforms** and **excursions** for their child up until the age of 16.

From 2013, the Victorian Government is restructuring the EMA to better target financial support to families on lower incomes. Payments made direct to parents will be increased for eligible recipients at all year levels up to age 16, with an additional increase for parents with students in Years Prep and 7 in recognition of the additional costs at these transition points.

In 2013 the annual EMA payment for families with children in primary school (years 1-6) will receive a payment of \$150. Families with children in secondary school (Year 8 up until the age of 16) will receive an annual payment of \$250.

The School Start Bonus which was previously received by EMA families has been discontinued as a separate payment from 2013. However, additional funding has been incorporated into the EMA meaning that parents of children in Prep and Year 7 will receive boosted EMA payments of \$200 and \$300 respectively in those years.

From 2013, the EMA will no longer be paid 50/50 between the parent and the school. The 50% school portion of the EMA will no longer be paid to schools on behalf of parents. However, \$62 million over four years will be redirected to the State's most needy schools to assist families on lower incomes. These funds will form part of the school Student Resource Packages to be allocated at the local level.

### New EMA payment option

From 2013, on the EMA application form you can choose to have your EMA payment;

- Paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into your nominated bank account **or**
- Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection **or**
- **Paid to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses**

The introduction of the new payment option to have the EMA payment directed to the school provides parents with extra flexibility to assist with budgeting towards education expenses.

### Eligibility:

To be eligible for the EMA in 2013, you must:

- be either a parent or guardian of a primary or secondary school student up to the age of sixteen; **and**
- be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the *State Concessions Act 2004*\* **or** be a Veterans Affairs (TPI) pensioner **or** be a temporary foster parent.

\* i.e – the parent/guardian must be the holder of a valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card.

The eligibility criteria must be met as at **29 January 2013** (Instalment One) and **15 July 2013** (Instalment Two).

**Payment Amounts - 2013:**

	<b>Prep</b>	<b>Years 1 - 6</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 8 – Age 16</b>
<b>Instalment One</b>	\$140	\$105	\$210	\$175
<b>Instalment Two</b>	\$60	\$45	\$90	\$75
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$150</b>	<b>\$300</b>	<b>\$250</b>

\*Student year level (or age for ungraded and special school students) will determine the amount payable. Parents of students turning 16 years in 2013 are paid on a pro rata basis.

**Contact:** School Office for an EMA application form and to lodge your application. The closing date for EMA application forms to be submitted to the school is **28 February 2013**.