

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS)

Q1: What is the Secondary Assistance Scheme?

The State 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.

The Secondary Assistance Scheme (SAS) comprises of two allowances

- Educational Program Allowance (EPA); and
- Clothing Allowance (CA).

Q2: Who is eligible for the Secondary Assistance Scheme?

To be eligible for the allowance, the parent/ guardian must hold a Centrelink Family Health Care Card or Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card or a Veterans' Affairs (blue) card that is valid for at least 4 weeks at the time of applying (during term one).

Q3: At what age is a student eligible for Secondary Assistance?

Years 7 to 12 and up to and including the year the student turns 18 (17 and 6 months if under Home Education).

Q4: What payments do the parent/guardian/school receive?

The Secondary Assistance Scheme Allowance consists of two types of applications being SAS or Abstudy Supplement Allowance. Parents/guardians who apply for SAS receive:

- 1) \$115 Clothing Allowance, paid directly to the school or parent/ guardian. (Full \$115 paid even if enrolling after end of term 1).
- 2) \$235 Educational Program Allowance, paid directly to the school.

If however, the student qualifies for Centrelink ABSTUDY, then the parent/guardian can ONLY apply for ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance Payment which consists of:

- 1) \$79 Education Program Allowance, paid directly to the school. (Please note, Centrelink will make a payment of \$156.00 either directly to the school or parent so the total Education Program Allowance paid is \$235.00 which is the same amount as the Secondary Assistance Scheme payment.

Q5: What is Centrelink ABSTUDY and why can't I apply for SAS rather than ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance?

The Department of Human Services (Centrelink) provides support through a scheme called ABSTUDY. For further details of this scheme and payments, please contact Centrelink. (Note: Centrelink ABSTUDY payments are made for schooling expenses, the same purpose as the Secondary Assistance Scheme, **therefore both cannot be applied for**).

To ensure no student or family is financially disadvantaged, by setting the SAS ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance payment amount at \$79.00, this ensures a total payment for the Education Program Allowance of \$235.00 per student, regardless whether the parent/guardian has applied for SAS or SAS ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance as noted in the table below.

Student Type	EPA Payment Amount	ASA Payment Amount	Centrelink ABSTUDY Payment Amount	Total Payment Received by School
Student 1 – SAS application	\$235.00	Nil	Nil	\$235.00
Student 2 – ASA Application	Nil	\$79.00	\$156.00	\$235.00

Q6: A student is receiving ABSTUDY payments. Can they also receive Secondary Assistance?

No, those receiving the \$156 or \$78 ABSTUDY School Fees Allowance payment from Centrelink (which can be paid to either the parent or the school), cannot claim Secondary Assistance.

The ABSTUDY School Fees Allowance is for schooling expenses, the same purpose as the Secondary Assistance Scheme; therefore both cannot be applied for. Recipients of the ABSTUDY School Fees Allowance may apply for the \$79 ABSTUDY Supplement Allowance.

Q7: Can we send in late Secondary Assistance applications?

Late applications can be accepted and will only be approved by the Director, Schools Resourcing and Support under extenuating circumstances. All applications will still be bound by the eligibility criteria for date of birth and possession of an appropriate card, which is valid during first term.

All late applications must be accompanied with written letter from either the parent or school, detailing the extenuating circumstances for the late application.

Q8: A student has arrived from interstate and started school after the cut off date (i.e. first term). Can they still apply for Secondary Assistance?

Yes, providing they have a Commonwealth concession card which is valid during first term. The clothing payment will be made in full, but the Education Program Allowance will be pro-rata at \$58.75 per term enrolled.

Q9: A student is not listed on the parent's concession card. Can they still apply for Secondary Assistance?

No. The only exception to this is if the student has turned 16 and has been removed from the family card and has been issued with his/ her own card. The parent must still hold a card.

The only exception to this is when a student holds their own health care card and has been declared 'Independent' by Centrelink (e.g. Independent Youth). In this instance, a letter of confirmation from Centrelink needs to accompany the application and the clothing payment will be made directly to the student. The supporting Centrelink documentation must specifically have the word "Independent". The claimant details will need to be entered and the form marked "independent".

Q10: Can a grandparent who has primary care of the child apply for Secondary Assistance?

Yes, if the grandparent is the recognised guardian(s) and the student is listed on the grandparent's card.

Q11: A parent has been granted a concession card after first term. Are they still entitled to claim Secondary Assistance?

No, the card must be valid sometime in first term except where they have arrived from overseas after first term.

Q12: When will the Education Program Allowance be paid?

Once the form is completed by the parent/ guardian, the school has to sight the claimant's card and authorise the application. The school is to then forward the forms to the Schools Resourcing & Support Directorate for processing.

Applications received before 1 April 2016 will be processed for payment to the school in the April gateway, subsequent applications will be paid in the July gateway.

Q13: Where can I get the form from?

Additional copies of application forms are available on the website.

<http://det.wa.edu.au/finance/detcms/navigation/student-allowances/>

In 2016, applications can be completed on-line. Please refer to your end of year notes and Ed-e-mail dated 17 November 2015. Schools may wish to have parents completed a manual form (as part of their enrolment booklet information) and witnessed by the School Officer. Applications can then be data entered into the on-line system. A copy of the completed Secondary Assistance Scheme form should be retained by the school as a record of the students who have applied.

Q14: Why should we complete applications Online?

The benefits of completing applications online include enabling confirmation of payment and much faster processing, which means more applications are paid in the April Gateway. The auto-receipting in RM Billing will also reduce your workload. Additionally, it ensures no applications are lost in transit.

Q15: What is the Year 7 Special Case Consideration?

When the State the Department of Education Government announced the move of Year 7 to secondary settings, it also acknowledged that some families living in country areas may experience greater challenges in preparing for the transition of Year 7 to secondary schooling from the year 2015.

Therefore on a case by case basis, principals at some small country schools can offer these families special consideration for their children to remain in primary school for Year 7. This option is designed to help parents to plan the most suitable timing and arrangements for the education of their children and is available to families for 2016 and 2017.

The application and approval for special case consideration (SCC) currently resides with the principal of the local primary school. The decision about Year 7 children remaining in primary school is made based on the individual family's circumstances and whole of school exemptions cannot be made.

Parents with children enrolled in schools in or near regional towns and centres that have access to secondary schools or district high schools do not have the option for SCC.

Q16: Due to health reasons, one of our parents can not physically attend school to complete their SAS application and show their Concession Card. Is there a way for a witness to verify their Concession Card and signature on the Secondary Assistance Scheme application form, providing the form is then supplied to the school for checking prior to submitting to the Schools Resourcing and Support Directorate?

Yes, there are rare circumstances when a parent/guardian cannot physically attend school. To complete an application in these circumstances, a certifying witness may be used. Below is a list of certified witnesses and an example of how the document must be witnessed.

You must ensure that the Secondary Assistance Scheme Application plus the certified copy of the applicable Concession Card are sent together to Schools Resourcing and Support Directorate to process the application.

Q17: Who can certify the Concession Card and witness your signature on the Secondary Assistance Scheme Application form?

- A police officer
- A Justice of the Peace
- A notary public
- An officer with, or authorised representative of, a holder of an Australian Financial Services Licence (AFSL), having five or more year's continuous service with one or more licencees
- A permanent employee of Australia Post with five or more years of continuous service who is employed in an office supplying postal services to the public
- A person enrolled on the role of a State or Territory Supreme Court or the High Court of Australia, as a legal practitioner (continued next page)
- A registrar or deputy registrar of a court
- An Australian consular officer or an Australian diplomatic officer
- A judge of court
- A magistrate
- A Chief Executive Officer of a Commonwealth Court

Q18: How to Certify your Concession Card:

All copied page(s) or our original Concession Card document need to be certified as true copies by any individual approved to do so:

Q19: The following person must sight the original Concession Card and include the following details on the copy:

1. Stamp or write "I certify this is a true copy of the original document" on each page (if more than one page)

Followed by:

2. Printed Name
3. Signature
4. Qualification (eg Justice of the Peace) and
5. Date

The image shows a Western Australia Health Care Card with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- Western Australia**
- NAME**
- STREET ADDRESS**
- SUBURB WA POST CODE**
- REFERENCE NUMBER**
- FAMILY MEMBER 1 REFERENCE NUMBER**
- FAMILY MEMBER 2 REFERENCE NUMBER**
- Expires 31 DEC 2015**
- CARD START 1 JAN 2015**
- Signature of cardholder**: A handwritten signature in blue ink.
- Handwritten Certification**: "I certify this is a true copy of the original document" written in blue ink.
- Signature**: A handwritten signature in blue ink.
- Printed Name**: "John Walter Jones" written in blue ink.
- Qualification**: "Justice of the Peace" written in blue ink.
- Date**: "02/03/2015" written in blue ink.