



# Ardoch School Costs Guide

New South Wales

2019

A guide for parents on how to manage and reduce school costs



[www.ardoch.org.au](http://www.ardoch.org.au)

## ABOUT ARDOCH



Ardoch has been supporting disadvantaged children and young people for 30 years.

Our vision is that every child's potential is realised through full participation in education, and our mission is to increase engagement in education, build the aspirations and enhance the learning outcomes of children and young people in disadvantaged communities.

We achieve this by mobilising volunteers and connecting partners to build the capacity of schools and early years centres in these communities and advocating for, and influencing, policy change to reduce inequity in education.

Ardoch currently works with approximately 100 schools and early years services across Australia. The majority of our partners are in Victoria where we have a particular focus on disadvantaged communities around Dandenong, Frankston, the northern suburbs of Geelong and Melbourne's West. We are actively seeking to expand the number of schools we support in other states and territories.

Our programs are focused on literacy, science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and offer incursions and excursions that enable children and young people to broaden their horizons.

# INTRODUCTION



The Ardoch School Costs Guide is intended to support parents, carers and those who care about children's education by ensuring that children and young people have everything they need to learn and realise their potential.

We know that there are additional costs for families when children start, or return to, school each year and the aim of this guide is to help inform you about the different costs of education and assist you to manage these.

We know that simply working out and understanding these costs, and how to reduce them can be overwhelming. This guide is here to help you. You can read it all at once or dip into it when needed.

We also believe that the personal role you play in supporting children to learn is the most critical. By engaging in what children are learning, talking about the benefits of school, and building positive relationships with people at your child's school you reinforce the importance of education. We believe education is the key to young people having chances and choices in life.

We have been producing this guide in Victoria for a number of years now and as we begin to partner with schools in the Sydney region we hope that you will also find this information useful.

We welcome any suggestions for improvement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Kylee Bates', is positioned above the printed name.

Kylee Bates  
Chief Executive Officer  
[ceo@ardoch.org.au](mailto:ceo@ardoch.org.au)

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# 1. SCHOOL FEES



Free education is the law but there are many additional fees that schools may charge. These can fall into the following three categories:

## ★ Essential education items

These items can include a school diary, travel to school sports and some camps.

This is a compulsory bill. It should be sent to you at least six weeks before the end of school the year before (possibly in November). You should be given the opportunity to pay this bill in the year of schooling.

The school may also be able to offer a payment plan. Contact them to find out what support they can offer.

## ★ Optional extras

Extras can include music lessons and extra-curricular activities.

You can choose whether or not you wish to pay this bill. However your child will not be included in the activities if this bill is not paid. Sometimes this bill includes items that most other students will have e.g. lockers. Ask your school to find ways to ensure that your child is not left out.

## ★ Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contributions can include costs for buildings.

Voluntary contributions for school fees are voluntary. Schools encourage payment because the money contributes to the school budget and allows the school to offer a richer program to the students. Fees are voluntary and students should not be prevented from participating in activities/curriculum because these contributions aren't paid.

For more information go to [education.nsw.gov.au](http://education.nsw.gov.au) and search: 'voluntary school contribution'.

## 2. GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



### ★ Federal government assistance

Federal government assistance is provided through Centrelink. For up to date information please check the Centrelink website at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

Here is a summary of the payments which students may be eligible for:

#### The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Scheme

Indigenous secondary students may be eligible for Abstudy which provides financial assistance for schooling or further studies. Indigenous primary students living at home and aged 14 years or more on 1 January in the year of study may also be eligible for assistance.

#### Assistance for Isolated Children's Scheme

This scheme provides for families who have a primary, secondary or under 16 year old tertiary student who cannot go to an appropriate government school because they live too far away or have a disability or special need that cannot be met at a local state school.

#### Youth Allowance

Full-time secondary students may apply for the Youth Allowance Scheme through Centrelink, if they are aged 18.

### ★ Local Government Assistance

Local governments generally do not provide assistance to individuals and families with education costs. Some local government areas provide programs under School Focused Youth Service funds but this is a service provided to schools. Ask your school administration if the school accesses the School Focused Youth Service.

### 3. COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE OPTIONS



#### ★ Community organisations

##### St Vincent de Paul Society

St Vincent de Paul Society can assist people in need through the following programs:

★ The Family Assistance Hotline is a central assistance hotline for anyone who is experiencing financial hardship. Volunteers will make a home visit and provide relevant assistance. Emergency relief may be given in the form of food parcels, food vouchers, and assistance with utility bills, clothing, furniture and referral. The assistance given is based on the assessment conducted by volunteer members at the time of the home visit.

- **Ph: 1800 606 724**

★ No Interest Loan Scheme® (NILS) provides interest-free loans for individuals or families on low incomes to access credit for the purchase of essential goods and services. As loans are repaid, the money is lent out to other members of the community to utilise this service.

- **[www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) (search 'NILS')**

★ The Early Links program provides time-limited support to families of children aged less than nine years around the time of their child's diagnosis with disability or developmental delay.

- **Ph: Hunter Region: (02) 4905 0700 - Ph: Central Coast Region: (02) 4326 0400**

- **Email: [early.links@vinnies.org.au](mailto:early.links@vinnies.org.au)**

St Vincent de Paul Society manages many other local services, so check the website for services in your area:

- **[www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) (search 'Find Help')**

##### The Smith Family

The Smith Family offers a Learning for Life program to students facing disadvantage. To be eligible, your child must attend a school in which The Smith Family works and you would need to contact your school's principal who may be able to refer you. There are limited scholarships available.

- **[www.thesmithfamily.com.au](http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au)**



## COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE OPTIONS (cont.)



### Good Shepherd Microfinance

Good Shepherd Microfinance has a range of financial programs and loans that you may be eligible for that assist with education and other expenses.

- [www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au](http://www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au)

### A Start in Life

This Sydney-based charity provides ongoing financial support for education costs to eligible students who are engaged in full time education. Based on the identified needs of students, assistance may include school fees, books and stationery, school uniforms, regulation school shoes, school camps and excursions, remedial tuition, IT, extra and co-curricular activities, internships/work experience, and accommodation/living costs.

- Ph: (02) 9264 3017

- Email: [sfmt@astartinlife.org.au](mailto:sfmt@astartinlife.org.au)

- [www.astartinlife.org.au](http://www.astartinlife.org.au)

### ★ Online search options

The Internet has a great range of information to help you find support services. It can be useful to know the right places to look and the right words to search.

Below are keywords to search if you are:

1) Experiencing a crisis

*Material aid, emergency relief, financial aid, emergency housing or accommodation, food vouchers, crisis assistance*

2) Needing school-related support

*School support, education support*

Websites which might be useful are:

Infoxchange Service Seeker

- [www.serviceseeker.com.au](http://www.serviceseeker.com.au)

Infoxchange Service Seeker is a useful search site for all community support services

Human Services Network

- [www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au)

The human services directory is a government website which lists health, disability, aged

### 3. COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE OPTIONS



care, welfare, community, education, legal and housing services in New South Wales. Your local council website will usually have a community services directory which you can use to look up services in your area.

NSW Government Family & Community Services

- [www.community.nsw.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/support-and-counselling-numbers](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/support-and-counselling-numbers)

The Department of Family & Community Services provides a comprehensive list of Programs, services and support for families in times of crisis.

### 4. UNIFORMS

#### ★ Within your school

Uniform Shop

Often the uniform shop will keep second-hand stock as well as new items.

Swap Days

Some schools have swap days which are usually organised by the parents' Association. Check with your school to see what they have available.

Connecting with other families

You may know someone who has children slightly older than your children who could pass on second-hand school uniforms.

Setting up a system

You may like to be involved and set up a second-hand uniform shop within your school. Second-hand uniform shops are often set up by parents within their school so contact the school's Parents' Association to find out more information or to get the ball rolling.

#### ★ Generic (plain) uniform items

Department stores such as Big W, Target and K-mart sell a range of plain, school coloured clothes that can be used as uniform wear. These garments retail for a fraction of the regular

## UNIFORMS (cont.)



uniform suppliers' price. If available, ask your school for an iron-on or sew-on logo to put on purchased items.

### ★ Online options

The following websites may have second-hand uniforms for your school listed. Searching is free on all of them – although listing an item to sell may incur a cost.

Sustainable School Shop - [www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au)

The Uniform Exchange - [www.theuniformexchange.com.au](http://www.theuniformexchange.com.au)

## 5. TEXTBOOKS

### ★ Within your school

#### School book sale days

Often a school will organise for second-hand textbooks to be sold at discounted prices to students. Most schools hold their second-hand book sales in early December.

#### Hiring Textbooks

Some schools allow families to hire text books for the year at a nominal cost. Under this scheme it is the student's responsibility to care for the textbooks and ensure their return to the school at the end of the year.

#### Understanding what is needed

Speak with the school about the textbook list. Explore the following:

- When in the year the textbooks are needed. Some textbooks may be needed later in the year and some earlier. You can buy the essentials first.
- Is it important to have the most up-to-date edition? Previous editions are much cheaper than the latest edition and may be just as acceptable to the school even though they are not listed on the official textbook list.

## TEXTBOOKS (cont.)



### Setting up a textbook sale day at your school

You may like to be involved and set up a textbook sale day within your school. Second-hand textbook sale days are often set up by parents within their school so contact the school's Parents' Association to find out more information or to get the ball rolling.

### ★ **Selling your old textbooks**

You can sell your old textbooks through a range of avenues:

1) The school's textbook supplier may accept second-hand textbooks for a trade in. Only current textbooks in good condition are usually accepted. The school's textbook supplier details will have their contact details on the booklist issued to you by the school.

2) You can sell textbooks online – see the options below.

### ★ **Online options**

There are many online options for both new and second-hand textbooks which may be cheaper than school's recommended supplier. Make sure you search for the correct edition and factor in any postage costs.

### For second-hand textbooks try the following websites:

- [www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au](http://www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au)
- [www.tstextbooks.com.au](http://www.tstextbooks.com.au)
- [www.textbooksoz.com](http://www.textbooksoz.com) (for new and second-hand text books)
- [www.brotherhoodbooks.org.au](http://www.brotherhoodbooks.org.au) (for novels)
- [www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)
- [www.gumtree.com.au](http://www.gumtree.com.au)
- [www.schoolbooks.com.au](http://www.schoolbooks.com.au) (for new and second-hand text books for secondary and high school)

### Online bookshops to try for cheaper new books (remember to check postage costs):

- [www.angusrobertson.com.au](http://www.angusrobertson.com.au)

## TEXTBOOKS (cont.)



- [www.bookdepository.com](http://www.bookdepository.com)
- [www.booktopia.com.au](http://www.booktopia.com.au)
- [www.dymocks.com.au](http://www.dymocks.com.au)
- [www.robinsonbooks.com.au](http://www.robinsonbooks.com.au)
- [www.readings.com.au](http://www.readings.com.au)

### ★ Your local library

Your library may have key textbooks that are available to borrow.

### ★ Sharing books

There may be an option to share in the purchase and usage of a textbook with a fellow student. Costs are reduced by each of you paying half the price and then time-tabling/organising usage around your individual study needs.

Some schools have a communal stationery pool which parents pay a fee and contribute to. Other schools expect you to purchase all the supplies based on a list which they provide.

## 6. STATIONERY



Some schools have a communal stationery pool which parents pay a fee and contribute to. Other schools expect you to purchase all the supplies based on a list which they provide.

### ★ Shop around

There are often cheaper options than the school supplier. Check out these stores (in-store or online) that sell stationery:

- [www.kmart.com.au](http://www.kmart.com.au)
- [www.bigw.com.au](http://www.bigw.com.au)
- [www.officeworks.com.au](http://www.officeworks.com.au)
- [www.thestationeryshop.com.au](http://www.thestationeryshop.com.au)

Shop around and take your list to local stationery shops and they may be able to quote you on how much it will cost to fill.

Use stationery left over from previous years if appropriate.

## 7. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT

The requirement for students to have personal digital devices is common in secondary school. Here are some organisations that can help you meet the costs of devices and other IT equipment.

### Schools

Schools may have payment plans in place to help you pay for IT equipment or ask them to see how they can support you.

### Good Shepherd Microfinance

Good Shepherd Microfinance has loans that you may be eligible for to help pay for IT equipment.

- [www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au](http://www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au)

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT (cont.)



### ★ Buying

The organisations listed below offer reconditioned computers at discounted prices to students and families who are Health Care Card holders.

#### Computer Bank NSW

**Ph: (02) 6745 5581**

**- [www.cbnsw.org.au/about](http://www.cbnsw.org.au/about)**

Computer Bank NSW is an organisation aimed at bridging the divide between those who have access to technology and those that do not. They supply discarded laptops to those who are not able to afford them.

#### WorkVentures

**Ph: 1800 112 205**

**- [www.shop.workventures.com.au](http://www.shop.workventures.com.au)**

WorkVentures is Australia's oldest not-for-profit IT social enterprise helping people engage with technology for over 30 years. Their refurbished computers are top quality machines donated by large corporates which the WorkVentures team bring back to as-new condition and sell for a fraction of their original cost.

### ★ Free services

Schools, local libraries and the State Library of New South Wales all offer computer and internet access free of charge.

## 8. STUDENT TRAVEL

### ★ Community connections

Walking, riding a bike and carpooling are all great ways to get to school. Email or ask other parents to see if there are any lift-sharing arrangements your children may be able to be a part of.

## STUDENT TRAVEL (cont.)



### ★ Public transport

#### Primary and Secondary students

Primary and secondary students in NSW could be entitled to free or concession travel to and from school, through the School Student Transport Scheme (school journeys by public transport) or the School Drive Subsidy (for areas where there is no public transport).

- [www.apps.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts](http://www.apps.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts)

For students who live in Sydney and surrounding areas and do not qualify for the above schemes, there is concession travel available with a School Term Bus Pass (for travel to and from school) and Child/Youth Opal Card (for travel anytime).

For students who live in regional NSW and do not qualify for the above schemes, they should check concession travel options with local transport operators.

For further information and application forms please visit:

- [www.transportnsw.info](http://www.transportnsw.info)

### ★ Assisted School Travel Program

Students with a disability may be eligible for transport assistance under the Department of Education Assisted School Travel Program (ASTP). The ASTP provides free and specialised transport to and from school where parents and carers are unable to provide transport for the student.

For more information, please visit:

- [www.education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/astp](http://www.education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/astp)

### ★ Fares allowance

This allowance assists students who are living away from their permanent home to cover the cost of travelling to and from their place of study. Your local Centrelink can provide you with further information.



## 9. EXCURSION OR CAMP COSTS



Excursions and camps fall within the 'essential education items' payment which means that schools can require payment for them. If you are finding it a challenge to pay for an excursion or school camp talk with the school and try to negotiate a payment plan.

If you are unable to reach an alternative payment option and your child is not able to attend the excursion or camp, the school should provide an alternative option for your child.

## 10. FOOD COSTS

There is growing research linking nutrition to educational outcomes. Breakfast is a key meal for students to help them engage actively at school.

Some hints are:

- ★ buying at markets
- ★ buying bulk foods and then breaking down into little portions for lunch boxes rather than buying snack pack sizes which tend to be more expensive
- ★ tuckshop/canteen lunches are more expensive than packing a home lunch

Some schools have Breakfast Clubs, which can help to provide breakfast options for students. The Foodbank NSW and ACT has established a School Breakfast Club pilot program in NSW, which is aiming to provide a healthy breakfast to 700 of the most disadvantaged schools across NSW and ACT. Check with your school to find out about potential support through Breakfast Clubs and/or School Pantries.

If you are in crisis or struggling on an ongoing basis to provide breakfasts and lunches for your children it may be worth seeking either some crisis assistance or some ongoing assistance. See the section 'Community Assistance Options' on page 3.

## 11. EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES



### ★ Scholarships

The Department of Education

The Department of Education provides a number of scholarships to eligible students.

- [www.education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/jobs-and-opportunities/career-opportunities](http://www.education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/jobs-and-opportunities/career-opportunities)

Scholarships - Private Schools

Private schools often provide a range of scholarships to successful applicants. These scholarships can be partial or full scholarships for payment of academic fees.

Private school scholarships are usually advertised early in the year for the forthcoming year. For example, scholarships for 2020 are usually advertised in February/March 2019.

To find out what secondary scholarships may be available, contact the education institution directly or have a look on the Independent Schools Scholarships and Bursaries website which provides some basic scholarship information.

- [www.issb.com.au](http://www.issb.com.au)

### ★ Tutoring

Professional tutoring services can be very expensive. Contact your school or Local Council about free tutoring or homework clubs in your area.

Often your local library will run homework clubs and other educational support services.

Many public libraries and schools now offer a free online study support service called 'Studiosity'. This service provides students with access to a network of professional subject specialists for homework help. Students in Years 4 through to 12 can get free help with tricky homework questions, assignments or exams by logging on at the library, school or from home (using their library card or school access code). This service is available Sunday to Friday from 3pm to midnight AET.

## EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES (cont.)



Follow these steps to access Studiosity online:

1. Go to the website at [www.studiosity.com/connect](http://www.studiosity.com/connect)
2. Log in by using your library card or school access code
3. Select the subject and year level for which you would like assistance

### ★ Education Support and Information Organisations

#### School Parents' Association

Many schools have a parent association that can represent your issues to the school management. They may also be able to put in place processes to assist with reducing costs within your school, e.g. second hand uniform shop, textbook exchange day.

#### New South Wales Department of Education Information and Referral Service

This is the State Government department responsible for the state school system. Their website has a lot of valuable information for parents and students.  
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/>

#### Parents Council

The Parents Council for New South Wales aims to represent and support parents with children at independent schools on educational and related issues.

**Ph: 0438 558 276**

**- [www.parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au](http://www.parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au)**

#### New South Wales Multicultural Commission

The NSWMC is the main link between New South Wales' culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and the Government.

**Ph: 02 8255 6767**

**- [www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au)**

#### New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.

This is a not-for-profit Aboriginal organisation which provides advice on education and training and represents the opinions of the Aboriginal community.

**- [www.aecg.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au)**

## 12. CALENDAR FOR COST CUTTING



Month	What to do	Notes
November/December	Apply for scholarships	Through Department of Education (see Page 14)
	Organise textbooks	Look for cheap second-hand or online options
January	Pay school fees for year	
	Buy all stationery and uniforms	Look for back-to-school sales at department stores
	Apply for scholarships	Private schools (see local papers)
April	Check with school about the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund application	
May	Start to organise winter uniforms	
July	Budget for new school shoes	
	Explore options to set up a textbook sale day at your school for the end of the year	Contact the school's Parents Association

## 13. USEFUL CONTACTS



Below are organisations which may be able to provide support during challenging times. For more options see section 'Community Assistance Options' on page 3.

St Vincent De Paul Society

**Ph: 02 9419 4236**

Salvation Army

**Ph: 02 9264 1711**

Foodbank NSW

**Ph: 02 9756 3099**

The Smith Family

**Ph: 1300 326 459**

**Further copies of the  
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can be downloaded from  
[www.ardoch.org.au](http://www.ardoch.org.au)**

*The information contained in this booklet was accurate at the time of printing. Please contact individual organisations to confirm current information prior to accessing services.*

*If you found this publication useful or have any suggestions, please send us an email at [info@ardoch.org.au](mailto:info@ardoch.org.au)*