

CAMPS, SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS FUND POLICY



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CAMPS, SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS FUND

**Published by the Communications Division
for Financial Services Division
Department of Education and Training
Melbourne
January 2020**

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Introduction

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom.

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) is provided by the Victorian Government to ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities.

School camps provide children with inspiring experiences in the outdoors; excursions encourage a deeper understanding of how the world works and sports teach teamwork, discipline and leadership. All are part of a healthy curriculum.

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) administers the CSEF to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

Although administratively the fund is received through the school, the full amount is intended for the benefit of the eligible student.

EXPENSES FOR WHICH THE CAMPS, SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS FUNDS SHOULD BE USED

Schools are required to use the CSEF payment for expenses relating to camps, sport and/or excursions for the benefit of the eligible student.

Some common examples of school-organised programs for which the CSEF payment may be used include:

- School camps/trips
- Swimming and other school-organised sporting programs.
- Outdoor education programs.
- Excursions/incursions

The CSEF payment cannot be used towards voluntary school charges, books, stationery, school uniforms, before/after school care, music lessons, locker hire, classroom/homework materials, graduations/formals, or other expenses unrelated to camps, sports or excursions.

Schools are responsible for:

- communicating to families the availability of CSEF to eligible students
- accepting and processing application forms from families (up until the end of term two)
- entering all applications onto the CSEF System for processing
- ensuring any monies received from the CSEF are used for the cost of camps, sport or excursions for the benefit of the eligible student
- communicating to an eligible student's parent/carer as to how the school intends to allocate the CSEF payment to assist the student.

COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

It is the school's responsibility to advertise in the school newsletters about the allowance and make application forms available to parents. Where appropriate, schools should utilise the translated CSEF resources and translation services to communicate eligibility requirements to non-English speaking parents/carers.

Communication materials to assist schools with advertising CSEF eligibility are available online:

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx

Eligibility

There are two criteria that must be met:

CRITERIA 1 - ELIGIBILITY

The applicant must be one of the following:

1. a parent/carer (of the relevant student) who is:
 - on the first day of term one or the first day of term two an eligible beneficiary of either a Centrelink Health Care Card **or** a Pensioner Concession Card; or
 - an eligible beneficiary of a Veterans Affairs Gold Card; or
2. a temporary foster carer; or
3. the parent/carer of a student who is 16 years or older and who holds a valid concession card (such as a Youth Allowance Health Care Card or Disability Support Pension Card).

The parent/carer must submit an application to the school prior to the end of term 2.

Parents/carers who receive a carer allowance on behalf of a student, or any other benefit or allowance not income tested by Centrelink, are not eligible for the CSEF payment unless they also meet the above eligibility criterion.

Where the parent/carer is seeking eligibility based on holding a Centrelink Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card, eligibility will be determined when the relevant concession card successfully validates with Centrelink on either the first day of term one or term two.

If the eligible card is in the name of the student, the fund is only granted to that student, not their siblings.

CRITERIA 2 - BE OF SCHOOL AGE AND ATTEND A VICTORIAN SCHOOL

For the purposes of CSEF, students may be eligible for assistance if they attend a registered Victorian school. Typically, students are aged between five and 18 years.

School is compulsory for all Victorian children aged between six and 17 years of age.

CSEF is not payable to students attending pre-school, kindergarten, TAFE or who are home schooled.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

A special consideration category exists for:

- Families on a bridging visa, temporary protection visa, are in community detention or are asylum seeker families
- Students in out of home care
- Students in statutory kinship care

These students may be eligible for assistance if they attend a registered Victorian school and their parent/carer submits an application prior to the end of term 2.

ELIGIBILITY DATE

CSEF eligibility will be subject to the parent/carer's concession card being successfully validated with Centrelink on either the first day of term one or term two.

Payment

PAYMENT AMOUNTS

This section details the payment amount under the CSEF.

The amount payable is:

- \$125 for Primary school students.
- \$225 for Secondary school students.

For ungraded students attending a specialist school, the rate payable is determined by the student's date of birth.

PAYMENT TIMING

The CSEF is an annual payment to the school of the eligible applicant(s).

CSEF payments are remitted directly to schools and commence from March each year. Payments to schools will continue throughout terms one and two for additional applications added to the system.

CSEF payments are for the application year and cannot be claimed retrospectively for prior years.

CSEF APPLICATION PROCESS

Each year the CSEF system is open for schools to enter applications from the start of Term 1. Parents/carers wishing to apply for CSEF payments for a given year must submit their application form to the relevant school before the last day of term 2.

However, a parent/carer will only be required to submit an application form to the school in the following circumstances:

- the parent/carer is applying for the CSEF payment for the first time – i.e. an application form was not lodged with the school in the previous year; or
- circumstances have changed – e.g. there has been a change in the care arrangement of the student, a change of name or CRN, or a new sibling has commenced at the school and the parent/carer wishes to apply for the CSEF payment for the new sibling also.

Where a parent/carer is not required to submit a new application, schools can rollover/copy the previous year's application on the CSEF system to the current school year.

Eligibility are subject to the parent/carer's concession card successfully validating with Centrelink on either the first day of term one or term two. The validation occurs automatically through an interface between the CSEF system and Centrelink.

Schools should copy or sight the concession card to ensure that the parent's name and Centrelink Reference Number (CRN) matches the Centrelink database.

The CSEF program closes at the end of term 2 each year. Schools cannot accept or process CSEF applications on the CSEF system after this date.

However, special consideration applications for students from asylum seeker or refugee families who enrol in term 3 or 4 will be considered until the end of term 4. In this case schools must submit a scan of the application form and supporting documentation to the Department at csef@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Application forms are available online at www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx or printed copies are available at schools.

CSEF applications are subject to audit by the Department to ensure adherence with the policy. According to the Public Records Office document storage and retention policy, CSEF application forms are to be retained by schools for a minimum of seven years.

Shared custody

The CSEF system only allows one application per student. Parents/carers in shared custody situations (who both hold a concession card) must decide beforehand who applies for the CSEF at the school on behalf of the relevant student.

The CSEF is for the benefit of the parent/carer who is in receipt of the CSEF. Schools are not required to arbitrate this decision.

Schools can contact the Department's CSEF helpdesk for advice on 1800 060 970 or at csef@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Expenditure

Schools are responsible for allocating the CSEF payment towards camps, sports and excursion costs against the eligible student.

The CSEF cannot be used between siblings, except where a student leaves the Victorian education system.

Schools will need to communicate with eligible families regarding how the school intends to use the CSEF payment to assist the eligible child.

ACQUITTAL

Government Schools:

At government schools, the CASES21 system allows CSEF expenditure to be allocated against eligible students' expenses. When a CSEF payment is made to the school, the school must receipt the CSEF payment against the family account. Schools can then allocate the CSEF payment to appropriate camps, sports and excursion costs.

For more information, see the [CASES21 Business Process Guide](#) (Section 1).

Catholic Schools:

At Catholic schools the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) can advise schools as to the appropriate accounting treatment and acquittal process.

Independent Schools:

Independent schools may have different systems in place. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that their systems can allocate CSEF expenditure against eligible students' expenses.

UNUSED FUNDS

Any remaining portion of the CSEF not expended by the end of the school year may be carried forward by the school towards the following year's camps, sports and excursions expenses for the eligible child.

STUDENTS CHANGING SCHOOLS

The school that the student is enrolled at and attending on the 28 February census date is the school that must process and receive the CSEF payment.

If a student transfers to another Victorian school, including where a student is transitioning to secondary school, the default position is that the value of any unspent portion of the CSEF should follow to the student's new school, so that the student has access to the full value of the payment.

However, if the unspent portion is of a minimal amount, the schools may agree that the funds are not transferred as long as the new school commits to provide the student with assistance to the value of the unspent amount.

STUDENTS LEAVING THE VICTORIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

For students completing year 12 or otherwise leaving the Victorian school system:

- schools may allocate unspent funds to the student's siblings attending the same school once the student leaves school. This is the only time at which CSEF payments can be used for siblings.
- remaining CSEF funds will stay with the school and may be used to assist any students in need with school-incurred costs for camps, sports activities and excursions.

FAQs

Are families on a Bridging Visa, Temporary Protection Visa, Community Detention and Asylum Seeker families eligible for the CSEF?

Yes. A Special Consideration category exists for families on a Bridging Visa, Temporary Protection Visa, Community Detention and Asylum Seeker families. A letter from Australian Red Cross or similar welfare institution is required as evidence. Visa grant notice or Immi cards are also acceptable.

These applications are processed as 'Special Consideration' type applications.

Are students who reside in Out of Home Care and Residential Institutions eligible for the CSEF?

Yes. Institutions such as Mackillop Family Services, Anglicare, Berry Street Victoria and other Community Service Organisations are eligible to make an application for students residing on a short term or long term basis.

Applications are processed as 'Special Consideration' type applications.

Are Kinship Carers eligible for the CSEF?

Kinship carers (providing the arrangements are formalised through DHHS) are eligible to make an application for CSEF. A letter from DHHS or other Community Service Organisation confirming the kinship arrangement, together with any court order documents, is required to assess the application.

Applications are processed as 'Special Consideration' type applications.

Are students holding a Carer Allowance card eligible for the CSEF?

No. CSEF is an income-tested allowance. A Carer Allowance card cannot be used to apply for the CSEF as these card types are not income-tested by Centrelink.

Therefore, the parent/carer will not be eligible for CSEF with a Carer Allowance card unless they hold a valid means tested Centrelink concession card in accordance with the *State Concessions Act 2004*.

Are students holding a Child Disability card (CD), Foster Care card (FO) or Ex Carer Allowance (child) card (EH) eligible for the CSEF?

No. CSEF is an income-tested allowance. A Child Disability card (CD) or a Foster Care card (FO) or an Ex Carer Allowance (child) card (EH) which is in the name of a child cannot be used to apply for the CSEF as these card types are not income-tested by Centrelink in accordance with the *State Concessions Act 2004*. An EH card is a continuation of a CD card once the child turns 16 years.

For students 16 years or older, a Youth Allowance Health Care Card or a Disability Pension Card may be issued by Centrelink in the name of the student. Can the parent/carer claim the CSEF with this card?

Yes. If the student is 16 or older and is the holder of a valid means tested concession card (e.g a Youth Allowance Health Care Card, a Disability Support Pension card) that is in their own name, then a CSEF payment can be made subject to a successful manual validation with Centrelink. The CSEF payment will only be for the student that holds the card (not for siblings).

Are Foster Parents eligible for CSEF?

Only temporary Foster carers through DHHS are eligible for CSEF. A letter from DHHS is required indicating that they are temporary carers. If the foster carer has gone through court to become the permanent carer, they are then considered to be the parent/carer to the child and will require to be the holder of a valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card to qualify for CSEF.

Are parents/carers holding a Veteran Affairs card eligible for CSEF?

Parents/carers holding a valid Veterans Affairs Gold Card only are eligible for CSEF. Veteran Affairs White card and Veteran Affairs Orange card are not income tested and are not eligible for CSEF.

What options exist when a family has already paid for this year's camps, sports or excursion costs?

Given the timing of the CSEF payments to schools in term one, it is recognised that some families may have already paid up-front for this year's camps, sports or excursion expenses. In this scenario, the following options exist for schools to allocate the payment towards camps, sports and/or excursion expenses for the benefit of the eligible student. In addition to allocating the payment towards remaining camps, sports and excursion expenses in that year:

- carry over the unused amount to be used on eligible activities in the following year
- create a 'family credit' for the costs already paid. The credit can then be used towards other school expenses.

Contact Details

PARENTS/CARERS

Parents/carers should contact their child's school in the first instance. Information for parents is also available on the CSEF website www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/csef.aspx

SCHOOLS

Information and CSEF processing help for school administrators can be found at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/finance/Pages/csefschools.aspx

For CSEF policy advice, schools can email csef@edumail.vic.gov.au or phone the Department's CSEF Helpdesk: 1800 060 970.

For CSEF system and CASES21 support, schools can phone the DET Service Desk: 1800 641 943.