December 2012

Dear Parents

**Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in 2013 and Schoolkids Bonus**

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided by the Victorian Government to lower-income families to help with education-related costs. The payment is intended to assist with education-related costs. **You should apply for EMA at the start of the year when organising payment for the Parent Contribution.**

To be eligible for EMA you must:
- Be either a parent or guardian of a primary school student; and
- Be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension allowance or benefit ie be the holder of a valid Health Care Card or Pension Card which must be presented at the school office.

The eligibility criteria must be met as at 29 January 2013 for instalment 1 and 15 July 2013 for instalment 2.

Many of you may already be aware the State Government has made significant changes to the amount of money available to families via the EMA. These changes take effect in 2013 and will impact on the amount of money available to you to assist with paying your child’s education expenses.

To summarise the changes:-
- 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.**

- In 2013 the annual EMA payment for families with children in primary school (years 1-6) will be $150. This is an increase in the parent portion but an overall reduction of $85 in comparison to the total parent and school EMA of $235 in 2012. Payment for prep students will be $200 which is a reduction of $35 on the previous year.

- There will be an additional third payment option on the EMA form. Parents can elect to-
  1) Have the money directly deposited into the school’s account. This money can then be used to offset some of their child’s/children’s education expenses
  2) Be paid by cheque which can be collected at the school
  3) Be paid by direct deposit into their bank account.

**Payment amounts for 2013:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prep</th>
<th>Years 1 - 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instalment One</td>
<td>$140</td>
<td>$105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instalment Two</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Total</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$150</td>
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Schoolkids Bonus

Starting from 1 January 2013 the Commonwealth Government will introduce Schoolkids Bonus to help eligible Australian families with kids at school pay for education related expenses. The Schoolkids Bonus replaces the Education Tax Refund, which means you no longer need to keep receipts and claim through your tax return – and you get the money upfront so you have the money on hand when you need it most.

The Schoolkids Bonus will be paid in January and July each year. Eligible families will receive $410, paid in 2 instalments of $205, for each child in primary school.

The Schoolkids Bonus will be paid into the bank accounts of eligible families. If you claim Family Tax Benefit as a lump sum at the end of the financial year you will receive the Schoolkids Bonus automatically in January and July.

EMA, Schoolkids Bonus and Parent Contributions for 2013

Families can support the school by selecting the option to direct deposit their EMA payment into the school’s bank account. Additionally most if not all EMA recipients will be able to use the Schoolkids Bonus to pay the shortfall between the Parent Contribution amounts and the EMA payments.

Parents who are eligible for EMA and agree to have the money directly deposited into the school’s bank will have the $150 ($200 for preps) as a part payment towards the Student Requisite Charge and Information and Communication Technology Charge. EMA will not cover the extra curricula Excursion and Services Levy. Parents will need to pay this amount of $100 per child at the start of the year or agree to automatic credit card instalments to cover this cost.

You can find more information about EMA and Schoolkids Bonus at the following

You can also direct your questions to Lyn, Chris or Caroline in the school office or to myself.

Yours sincerely

Jason Walker – Principal
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