

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL SHOP



EDUCATION SAVINGS GUIDE

Introduction

The Education Savings Guide:

- Will save you lots of money on education expenses.
- Provides an insight and answers to the many questions parents ask about education.
- Has been compiled from ten years of experience in assisting thousands of families on the Sustainable School Shop helpline.

Savings are achieved in many ways:

- Can be instant – such as purchasing or selling a second-hand item.
- Or long term by selecting the correct university course or school.
- Or realising you may qualify for additional support each year.
- Or simply reducing your stress, as savings can be more than just monetary.

There's no secret formula, rather it's improving your understanding of the detail relating to the decisions you make, ensuring outcomes work best for you and your children, by benefiting from the experiences of others.

Food for thought: *second-hand is not second-best, second-hand Jane, nor a view of a person's social standing or wealth. Students wearing second-hand uniforms are indistinguishable from those who have purchased new, and are not considered to be different or lesser in any way.*

It's simply wasteful to throw away good items that can be still used, and silly not to take advantage of the additional resources available.

Recycling in schools helps another family, is meaningful, and builds school community.

Teaching children the benefits of recycling is important.

Quote: *"I only feel angry when I see waste. When I see people throwing away things we could use."* – Mother Teresa (Saint and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate)

Contents

1. Australian Education Landscape
2. National Curriculum
3. School Community
4. Higher Education
5. Jobs of the Future
6. What Makes a Good School?
7. Student Wellbeing
8. Eat Chocolate
9. The Buy and Sell Equation
10. Getting the Most out of Sustainable School Shop
11. Textbooks
12. Uniforms
13. Calculators
14. Musical Instruments
15. Stationery
16. Computers/Tablets
17. Internet and Mobile Telephones
18. Extra-Curricular Activities and Sports
19. Extra-Curricular Academic Tutoring
20. Transport – Bus/Train
21. School Camps/Excursions
22. School Fees
23. Scholarships
24. After School Care
25. Student Welfare Officers
26. State Peak Parent Associations
27. Education Focused Charities
28. Government Assistance
29. Education Savings Accounts

1. Australian Education Landscape

In tackling how to get the best out of your investment in your child's education, you will gain a better understanding of how schools work and attract students. The education sector is extremely competitive; all schools only exist by being able to attract students. It does not matter if your school is independent, catholic or public, the same applies: schools' existence is based on attracting sufficient enrolments.

Schools run as businesses in their own right – they enter into commercial arrangements for uniforms, resources materials, and so on. These arrangements are used to implement the policies of the school and assist their respective families, but can include provisions that provide financial incentives and contributions back to the school. These contractual arrangements often influence which services families use.

Have you ever heard school staff say the school has “too much money” or even “enough money”? It's unlikely, but whatever the answer, schools are on a path of continuous improvement, and financial resources are vital.

Every school receives requests for financial assistance from families in need; schools understand this form of assistance is critical and essential, but resources are very limited.

2. National Curriculum

The National Curriculum is an attempt to increase the level of standardisation in education learning, standards, assessments and outcomes between the states. Curriculums are customarily updated on a four-yearly basis. The recent move to a National Curriculum (2012), also known as the Australian Curriculum (AC) from Foundation to Year 10, was to be fully implemented by all states by 2015. This was a Gillard Government initiative, and what should have been a smooth transition led to much debate and bureaucratic argy-bargy between the different states, with continual changes that have seen wholesale changes of texts and education resources.

As State Governments are responsible for delivering education services, each have reverted to their own versions of the Australian Curriculum. This has achieved a more standardised approach nationally but has not achieved the outcome that many educators and families may have hoped. The next review of the Australian Curriculum is due in 2020.

The final two years of high school remain a state-based curriculum and each state's version is somewhat different. At these year levels, there has been some standardisation of resources; hopefully this trend will continue.

Students in Years 10-12 also can engage in Vocational Education Training (VET), and in some states, can elect an alternative senior years learning program that provides further literacy and numeracy studies but does not provide an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or a pre-requisite standard for entrance to university. These choices are

helpful and cater well to those wishing to go on to further vocational education and trades, undertaking industry traineeships, or directly entering the workforce.

3. School Community

Schools are very much tribal with families feeling a strong natural belonging to their school and school community. Schools rely on their respective parents to foster community and goodwill to one another, and encourage parents to be active in their community through Parents & Friends organisations and volunteering.

Whilst the main objective is to foster community and community events, fundraising often falls to these parent groups as schools are always looking to improve.



4. Higher Education

Higher education can include: university, tafe, RTO's, apprenticeships, cadetships, professional internships, employer run up skilling programs and so on.

When most think of higher education, the first thought is university, with undergraduate courses taking approximately four years to complete. Currently, many students automatically opt for a university education believing it to be a 'must have' in achieving success in life. This is simply not true, nor does it necessarily lead to higher thinking, new found enlightenment, and necessarily a job that is higher paid. It is not guaranteed or automatic.

Whilst many successfully complete their university degree, research shows:

- The 2015 national average university first year drop-out rate was 21.01%.¹
- 31.8% of the 2014 Bachelor graduates were still looking for full-time work four months after graduating.²

¹ Only domestic students not completing the first year or not re-enrolling at the start of second year. Source: Aust Gov Dept of Education, 2015 Higher Education Statistics.

Add to the above these uncertainties:

- Further students drop out in years 2, 3 and 4
- Students change courses
- From the above Bachelor graduates, 68.2% were in full-time work within four months of graduating. There was no information to show if this was within their discipline.
- Increasing uncertainty over which jobs will still be around in five or 10 years.

Students contemplating continuing study will need to think very carefully about what is the right pathway for their future career, as higher education can lead to significant debts, even if the course is not completed, as many students, often in their late teens, have mixed views as what might be the right career choice for them.

Food for thought: *technology is advancing at great pace and the employment landscape is rapidly changing; the largest saving may be your child taking a gap year to try out different jobs or an internship, experience independence, and discover what might be their thing.*

Quote: *“Maybe it’s just me but ‘gap year’ has always sounded like having a year off to party!” - Sophie Smith (Parent)*

University is very different from secondary school. Students, after the initial fun of orientation week, can feel somewhat lost, as the structure surrounding lectures and tutorials is looser, and requires the student on the whole to look after themselves. Lecturers sometimes don’t define resources well, and many publish their own material which is a requirement of their course subject. There tend to be edition changes regularly, and the texts are often substantial in price, especially for those students undertaking courses in the medical/science disciplines. Undergraduate courses vary considerably in contact hours, allowing some students to hold part-time employment, while others are lucky to be able to hold a simple casual job.

Student services play an important role in providing advice and assistance to students, including health, accommodation, and employment. In addition, there are many other on-campus services which provide assistance or resources.

TAFE/RTO (Registered Training Organisation) courses are designed to industry standards and resource materials/texts can change regularly due to changes in industry practice or regulatory/legislative requirements. TAFE classes and courses are structured with continuous assessment and feedback. For many students the TAFE pathway offers direct hands-on training coupled with further education, and suits those wishing to achieve a trade or to gain entry into the workforce with options for upskilling, and/or further education for entry into undergraduate degrees. Resources and texts are often optional but recommended, and are quite inexpensive in comparison to other further education resources. RTOs usually specialise in workplace training, often relying on self-directed learning with greater out-of-class workloads. They offer benefits to those wishing to skill up quickly. Tafe and RTO’s charge fees for their courses, VET FEE HELP is the student loan scheme for tafe.

² Graduate Careers Australia 2014 Survey. Over 100,000 Graduates participated in the survey.

\$\$ savings tip: *courses in the trades area may require specific toolkits and/or uniform requirements that can be pricey; these are usually a one-off expense and may have options for payment terms through the provider.*

Trap for the unwary: *students who do not complete their higher education course will most likely have a HECS / VET FEE HELP debt to repay.*

5. Jobs of the Future

What a tough subject! Young people today face greater uncertainties regarding future careers opportunities than earlier generations. Additionally, unlike most students before them there is a cost and debt with associated university, TAFE, RTOs and further training.

Noted educator and philosopher Mortimore Adler suggested there are three objectives of children's schooling:

- The development of citizenship
- Personal growth or self-improvement
- Occupational preparation

Most children commence school at age five; by Year 9 (around age 15) consideration of future occupations take hold through choices of electives; at age 17/18 they enter higher education/trade, and will be 21 at the completion of a degree/trade and in the workforce at 22 years of age. That's the plan and it has worked for most, but will that still be the case for the future?

Constantly we're bombarded with analysis which suggests the occupational landscape will be different in the future. Presently, there can be no doubt change is occurring with jobs in Australia and elsewhere. One recent report³ which was widely reported suggested 40% of current Australian jobs could be replaced by technology by 2025, with a further 18.4% of the workforce having a "medium probability" of their jobs disappearing too.

Let's be under no illusion, if true, this is profound and is another industrial revolution led by improving technology and greater automation. Areas already being affected include mining, agriculture and manufacturing – it's anticipated few industries will be unaffected by this change and not just low paid or manual jobs. Health, accounting, editors, dentists, economists and even drivers are some of the areas identified that may be most affected.

Students deciding possible careers paths four to seven years prior to being 'work ready' in their chosen career is made more difficult if 40% or more of 'today's' jobs are disappearing in the next 10 years or sooner. This effect of oversupply of

³ Committee for Economic Development of Australia June 2016 Report:
http://adminpanel.ceda.com.au/FOLDERS/Service/Files/Documents/26792~Futureworkforce_June2015.pdf

graduates in digitally disrupted disciplines has already occurred and is only gathering pace.

Secondary schools readily admit they don't know what jobs are going to be around into the future and this creates considerable uncertainty for them and their teachings.

I do know looking forward as best one can, identifying the underlying trends, building in preparedness for 'left field' events (unforeseen negative impacts) and accepting change by focusing on reality, will position both you and your children in the best possible way for the future.

If identifying the correct job/career path for your children is difficult or impossible, then an alternative approach is to ask yourself "what are the attributes/skills your children should have as they leave school which give them their best chance at a stable career and prosperous life?" Ask the school's career officer the same question.

Here is a suggestion: why not broaden your subject selection to cover a number of bases that may assist your entry to the workforce and also provide diverse options for further education? An example of this may be to do Higher Maths, English, Business Management, and Visual Design or Software Development. Many schools have specialist career teachers that will be able to provide advice and guidance on subject selection. It may be a mistake to lock yourself in to a profession or specific course pathway with little crossover or flexibility to other occupations – in essence putting all your eggs in one basket.

If your child is confronted with increased uncertainty for study or career, then taking time to discover what might be of interest, gaining experiences in the workforce, and understanding where talents and long term interests lie, might be a smart approach in an increasingly changing landscape.

Quote: "Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world." - Joel A. Barker (Futurist, author, film maker)

6. What Makes a Good School?

It may not be obvious at first glance how this topic found its way into this guide and for those families that glide trouble-free through their children's education it's quite understandable, but for many families this topic can cause significant distress.

I am often asked by parents what I believe makes a good school, or what school has impressed me, and why? This is the question of all questions, and in reality there is not a perfect answer. I remember a few years back Jane Caro released a book tackling this very subject. Jane is a huge advocate and supporter of public education, and naturally this was reflected in her writings – having said that, it's a good read for those who are researching and finding the best options for their own children, and a great starting point in finding your own answer.⁴

⁴ <https://www.newsouthbooks.com.au/books/what-makes-a-good-school>

My own take on this question is one where I see an ever-increasing amount of marketing and hype about schools' achievements and results. Consequently in my view, there's an over focus on academia, and an underwhelming appreciation of creativity, invention, and individuality.

Schools are formally bound to teach to the curriculum and do not have a say what is covered. What they can change is their approach to how the curriculum is taught. Some examples of this are: enquiry based learning, Montessori, Steiner and Kath Walker, to name a few. This is important for you to understand as some students are better suited in more structured classes whilst others thrive on being left to research and self-direct their own learning.

Regardless of which school you enrol your child, they will be covering the same area of study (exceptions – second languages offered, extra-curricular school activities and subject choices most notably in higher year levels, which texts are used for a given subject, etc). Schools in primary year levels may have specialist teachers for disciplines such as Art, Language, Physical Education and Music, while others may rely on the class teacher to cover all subjects. Secondary schools may have special programs for accelerated learning, music and/or arts, or will vary in subject choices in the senior year levels due to student numbers and preferences.

The reality and what has been repeatedly borne out by research: it does not matter the amount you spend, or the reputation of the school, or learning approach. Fundamentally, it depends on your child's engagement with their teachers and their feeling of belonging within their school. In a nutshell – it's all about whether they are happy, have friends, feel welcome, interact well in class and with their teacher, and feel safe and secure. It's about you as parents, feeling welcome and engaged, being able to speak freely about your child's progress, being involved with your child's learning, and being able to work through issues constructively and fairly, as from time to time there will be issues that are challenging. It is about the school accommodating your family and ensuring that there is mutual respect.⁵

The next step in your research in finding the right school will probably lead you to examine the results and school achievements. NAPLAN and Year 12 exam results are highlighted by schools as to their academic successes – but these need to be seen in context. Select-entry schools require students to sit an exam and compete for a place; these schools' NAPLAN scores of course will be amongst the best. Other schools have select-entry to senior years. Scholarships also skew results as this imports better performing students to schools.

An interesting question that keeps popping up is; for schools that have students who attended all year levels up to Year12, how have they performed and would this be a better performance measure?

⁵ <https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2015/04/private-schools-show-same-results-public-schools>
http://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/learning-frontiers-resources/engagement_in_australian_schools-background_paper-pdf.pdf

Schools use marketing to attract enrolments, and it is very difficult for families to easily and transparently assess the suitability of a school and gauge their actual performance. They're all passionate about your child's education, your child's wellbeing and pastoral care, and all have the most dedicated staff and highly trained teachers. Registrars/enrolment staff will provide you with the tour, take you into a few classrooms, meet some cheery students, and organise for you to have a chat with the principal.

So where do you go to get a more realistic understanding of the suitability, performance and management of a school, and what can be relied upon to make comparisons? Most families will start at the school's website and have a good read, getting a feel for the culture of the school. Schools' annual reports are standardised and provide reporting back to families and the wider public on the school's management, performance and finances; but having read numerous, it is clear that they are written and produced for public consumption but could certainly be expanded and made more informative. If a school is in financial trouble, or has had issues with families resulting in litigation, or serious compliance breaches, these are rarely reported, however this is something that all families would wish to know about. Similarly information on the total number of days that students were suspended, the number of students excluded or expelled, or the number of bullying reports for each year at the school would assist.

Good schools always value their staff, students and families, and promote open communication within their school community. Good schools are fully aware that there will be difficult issues from time to time and they welcome discussion, giving clear direction to their families with well written school policies. An indicator that something is less than ideal within a school could be sudden and unexplained departures of students or staff. In these instances the school community is entitled to a clear explanation and not just "personal reason" or "don't know" or "cannot say for legal reasons" etc, all of which might be a reasonable explanation for one or two departures but totally unacceptable for many.

When difficulties arise, grievance/complaints procedures should be easily found on the school's website and in their handbooks. If a complaint cannot be successfully arbitrated by the principal then some schools often provide access to an additional independent dispute resolution process, which again should be detailed within the school's information.

Which leads me to a very important point to note: enrolling in a public school is different to enrolling in a catholic/independent school. Public schools and their enrolments are covered by state legislation, and when issues do arise that do not have a happy ending, there are legislated processes that are there to assist in protecting your child's interests, overseen by the Department of Education and the state Ombudsman. Catholic and independent schools enrol their students under a common law contract often known as a 'Contract of Enrolment' or 'Letter of Offer' – this is a legal instrument that sets out the terms and conditions under which the enrolment operates in accordance with the relevant legislation. As such, it is then up to the school to provide the necessary procedures and adequate processes to deal with such issues, and offer independent mediation when discussions fail.

I remember years ago speaking with a copyright lawyer who put copyright in simple terms, "your copyright is only as good as your ability to defend it", and this is no different for families

when enrolled in these schools. Most families will rely on the school to do the right thing, but you must remember schools are a business, and when all else fails, some schools will do what's in their best interest, which may not be in your child's best interest, hence we hear of expulsions, exclusions, defamation cases and confidentiality agreements etc. In these situations families are at a disadvantage as the school has control.

Regardless of where the issue arose, be it in a government or non-government school, attaining restitution via the courts is lengthy, expensive, and demoralising for the family, even if the school is blatantly in the wrong. In most cases, the law doesn't value or recognise emotional hurt and damage and claims for compensation may not be adequate to cover the long-term damage done. Ultimately, whichever school, public or private, the Minister for Education in each state is responsible for the welfare of students and their interests.

Meeting the principal of the school is vitally important. The principal sets the tone of the school and implements the policies and direction from the Board/School Council. I have met many principals and I can say that it is one of the toughest jobs, but all have said the same thing – they find the role challenging and rewarding, and could not think of doing anything else. When meeting with the principal, do some homework and have your questions prepared. This will keep you focused on those things that are important to you, and it will ensure all your questions are answered. The outcome from this meeting will give you the best feel of the culture of the school and if you are like-minded in approach.

So now you've investigated the school website, taken the tour, met the principal, read the school's information and prospectus, reviewed the achievements and results, and you're still left with the same questions ... Is this the right school? Is this a good school?!

When you have narrowed down to the school that you believe will be best for your child request a trial. Most schools have short trial periods whereby you can try the school for a day. I suggest you try to extend it to 2-3 days, as this will give your child time to acclimatise and be actively involved in classes and the school community. It will also provide you with a good understanding and direct feedback from your own child if this feels right for them.

At the end of the day the best performance measure of a school is that your child is happy, engaged and extended in their learning, looks forward to going to school and you feel welcome. If that is the case, then it is a good school and the right school for you!

In NSW alone approximately 54,000 students (approx. 7%) change school at least once during the school year.⁶ Choosing the right school for your child to the best of your ability is important, as the expense and stress associated with changing schools can be significant.

Quote: *"It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education." - Albert Einstein (The person who was a slow learner at school and who failed this university entrance exam and yes it's the same person you think it is. Obviously it took him many years to recover from school)*

⁶ NSW Dept. of Education. Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation. Examined enrolment data from 2008 to 2014.

7. Student Wellbeing

We have included student wellbeing in this guide as currently schools have gravitated to using this as a major marketing tool, as a new point of difference with specialised wellbeing programs on offer.

Whilst the intentions may be meritorious, this is an area I personally believe should be about health and wellbeing, kept to broad based proven programs equipping students with advice, tools and assistance that will materially help them with their mental health and general wellbeing as they encounter issues into the future.

Students need to understand if they are unable to cope or find solutions to issues, they need to seek help early. Teenage years are difficult and a common time for the onset of numerous mental health disorders (the statistic often cited is that one in five⁷ people will need to seek professional help with a mental health issue). Often social stigma is attached to mental illness, which deters individuals from seeking help early, and this is where schools have a tremendous opportunity to constructively drive a change in attitudes.

Many schools now employ counsellors and psychologists to provide wellbeing support to their student community whereby student sessions remain confidential between the practitioner and the student. Whilst this is the expectation, it does not necessarily translate if challenged by parents. The Law Reform Commission has flagged this as an area of reform that needs further attention under the Privacy Act.

Sadly poor student behaviour from schools is great news headline material and increasingly the media is reporting on student bullying, cyber bullying, social media abuse, drug abuse, aggressive behaviour, and the list goes on. As the old saying goes, nothing travels faster than bad news and we end up listening to the school having to explain themselves, release apologies, defend their reputation and defend the actions of their students; and then there's the declaration of the remedial punishment. When reminiscing about your own youthful adventures, I'm sure you will remember those occasions where you may have told the tall story, behaved badly, treated someone poorly, had a prank backfire, or you did a really stupid thing. I wasn't a wild child but I do have some colourful stories that I am sure my parents would be quite shocked about if they had known.

8. Eat Chocolate

You might be reading this title and thinking "what?!"

Over the past eight years on the Sustainable School Shop helpline, the most common advice that I seem to dispense is "all will be fine, take a deep breath and eat chocolate". The end of the school year coupled with Christmas for many families is an extremely stressful time. Families are phenomenally busy and the additional workload of resource lists and organising school items for some, is one additional stress too many. I have plenty of families that simply cannot afford to pay for books prior to Christmas; it is real, and no matter whom

⁷ <http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media/reporting-mental-illness/facts-and-stats#Snapshot>

you are, life is unpredictable, there will be times when you do need support, and it is not something to feel ashamed or embarrassed about.

If I can borrow the famous line from a fellow townsman, Molly Meldrum “Do yourself a favour”, don’t worry about it at all, and tackle it when you have time, or are feeling less overwhelmed.

Then make yourself a nice cuppa, grab a couple of Tim Tams (my absolute favourite is the dark chocolate variety direct from the freezer – yum!) and find a quiet place for about an hour and tackle what you need to do job by job. If you do not get to the end, don’t worry, come back in a day or two. Believe me, you will be at the end of your tasks in no time at all! Maybe even with a smile.

So here’s the lowdown. It is only a booklist. There are many booksellers across Australia and you’ll not miss out. Booksellers will not say no to your order if it is a day, week, or month late. Buying and selling second-hand books will save you considerable expense. If you’re stretched for time, secondary school aged children are quite capable of listing their books for sale, and finding books on the Sustainable School Shop; so request their help, stay stoic, and do not let them off the hook!

If you are stretched financially, only purchase the uniform items you need for the short term. Purchase as much as you can second-hand and top up with new. If purchasing second-hand, always check with the school handbook for the current uniform listing and for any changing/ transitioning uniform items.

If you are having financial issues and struggling with fees, contact your school. They will be very supportive and will provide further advice and other payment options.

If you are changing schools due to issues (sadly this does occur) try to leave the baggage behind, and start with a positive attitude. If counselling is required, see your local doctor or health professional for further assistance and advice.

Teenage years are difficult for both the teenager and their parents. There are times when you’ll feel at your wits end but remember there is good support available across school, community and health services.

Now eat more chocolate – I can see that smile and relief already!“

“

Quote: *“There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate.” - Linda Grayson (Author)*

Quote: *“Strength is the capacity to break a Hershey bar into four pieces with your bare hands - and then eat just one of the pieces.” - Judith Viorst (Writer)*



9. The Buy and Sell Equation

The buy–sell equation is often misunderstood; simply good savings can be made on both sides of this equation.

Take booklists for example, I might have \$400 worth of new textbooks for next year to buy, but I find all of them second-hand and it only costs me \$200. My saving is \$200.

But, I also have textbooks to sell from the current year and I manage to sell all of them for \$150. My saving is, or I have made, \$150.

My total savings are \$350, or in other words, I'm \$350 better off. In the case of books and uniforms too, it's not uncommon that the items being sold cover most/all of the cost of the items being purchased, if purchased second-hand.

Trading tip: *the reality in trading second-hand items is to realise not everything will sell, and you won't find everything second-hand to buy. If your approach is reasonable and you 'leave something in it for the next guy' then you'll maximise your transactions and savings. Focus on what you've saved and not on those few items that didn't work out. You will be way in front.*

Quote: *"If you're not buying recycled products, you're not really recycling."* – Ed Begley, Jr. (Actor and environmentalist)

10. Getting the Most out of Sustainable School Shop

Sustainable School Shop is unique as the focus is on those items you need (through Wanted Ads) rather than – as with most other platforms – just the sell side. For both textbooks and uniforms, it's all about getting exactly the correct item. Near enough is not good enough.

From this point, most people navigate the Sustainable School Shop website very easily, but every now and then we find people who use eBay a lot and have their minds firmly fixed in that space expect the Sustainable School Shop functionality and buttons to be the same as eBay's. Then they call the helpline to complain. The remedy is very simple; we say "just place your mind in neutral and don't overthink our service, just read what is in front of you and follow the prompts." This works 99.9% of the time.

The Sustainable School Shop website offers choice and allows families to choose which access level and cost suits them best.

The four access levels are:

1. Searching for Free

Registering and manually searching the 'For Sale' ads on the main search page and gaining the sellers' contact details is free.

2. Advertising Single Items

Single items can be advertised for \$1.50 (Wanted or For Sale)

3. Annual Subscription (Includes Premium Searching)

Annual Subscriptions cost \$21.95, allowing you to advertise an unlimited number of items, and access the Premium Searching function and the Advanced Search Summary.

Annual Subscriptions last 365 days from your payment date, or if you already have a subscription, your subscription expiry date will be extended by 365 days.

4. Premium Searching

Premium Searching has been created for those families wishing to only search from the main search page, and costs \$3.95/Yr. Benefits include immediate access to:

- See and search all newly listed For Sale ads (newly listed For Sale ads are delayed 48 hours before they will appear to people searching for free)
- ISBN textbook numbers (when manually searching for textbooks, always search by ISBN. This guarantees only the correct texts are found. Book titles in For Sale ads are not standardised and our search engine is keystroke sensitive. Searching by title can often miss books or return incorrect books)
- Members' other ads
- Improved search filtering tools (improved filtering tools include: latest listed, condition and cheapest)

Alternatively

Some schools pay a bulk discounted fee on behalf of the families, who then automatically receive a school's subscription when they register on the Sustainable School Shop.

Recommendations

3-5 items to sell – purchase 3-5 single ads at \$1.50 each.

Need 3-5 items and have 3-5 items to sell – purchase an annual subscription at \$21.95.

Experience has shown that families always find more items to advertise and most upgrade to an annual subscription.

Schools/Heads of Curriculum strongly advise families to use ISBNs when manually searching for books or to list Wanted Ads and use the Advanced Search Summary.

Sustainable School Shop Guarantee

Sustainable School Shop unconditionally guarantees to refund your advertising/subscription fee if you feel the service has not been of value.

Sustainable School Shop undertakes to treat all clients with respect, courtesy and in good faith, while promoting and encouraging community and long-term relationships that deliver improved value and reward.

Pricing Guide

New and unused: 70% (Purchased new and is unused)

Excellent: 60% (Has been used but is unmarked, may have student's name on it)

Very good: 50% (Minor marks and slight wear showing)

Good: 40% (Marks and wear showing but not significant)

Fair: 25% (Well-worn but intact, and usable)

Only uniforms of good or better condition, to be advertised and traded – must have at least one year's wear left in it.

Trading tip: items for sale are competing with the other identical items listed for sale. Would you purchase the dearest or cheapest item?

Factors that influence purchase decisions include price, condition, location, school, other items the seller has, competition for the item and the numbers of the same item for sale.

Trading tip: when items are slow to sell try reducing your price 10-20%.

Maximising your savings

Many people believe that the web should offer everything for free and therefore they refuse to pay a cent. We do understand this mindset except services will not exist if people don't pay for them. In a number of instances it's a false economy or just a game.

If you are buying and selling items, take an annual subscription and use the functionality the website offers including the Advanced Search Summary, Uniform Stocktake Report and list Wanted Ads for those items you haven't found. This is the best way to buy and sell the most number of items and maximise your savings.

Remember in the school environment it's all about the exact items you need. Manually searching for free will produce results but many items will either not be found or they'll come and go between your searching sessions. List items for all your children no matter which school they attended.

We hear many different comments on the helplines, "Oh I only sell second-hand, I'd never buy" or "I only buy second-hand and I'm not interested in selling" or "I don't buy or sell second-hand but it seems such a waste to throw those perfectly good items out, is there someone I can give them to, (and for good measure) can someone come and pick them up?"

People lead very busy lives, but often that's an excuse to justify why something should not be done; buying and selling items really takes very little effort – purchasing new requires time and effort too, sometimes more than second-hand.

As with most endeavours it's all about finding how to do it, not why it shouldn't be done.

Bargain Hunters

Each marketplace has bargain hunters and Sustainable School Shop is no different; it's a strategy that works.

List all your items for sale early in the trading period and insert the item availability date in each ad.

Wait until the third week of January before you start to buy and you'll have the choice of all the items that were listed for sale during January (it's a lot), as school start is not far away the sellers are keen to sell so make them an offer when you find the items you're after.

For those books you cannot find second-hand, place a new book order online with a provider that delivers in 5-7 days and has a low delivery fee, Booktopia being one.

Quote: *"Pollution is nothing but the resources we are not harvesting. We allow them to be dispersed because we've been ignorant of their value."* – R. Buckminster Fuller (Author, theorist and inventor)

11. Textbooks

At Sustainable School Shop, we often hear parents complaining about the constant change of editions, and they can't understand why it changes so often, and in answering this, we need to understand the driving factors.

In Australia, most schools' curriculums run over a four-year period, with both schools and publishers working to that timeframe for a given resource. Edition changes within this period can and usually occur due to media change (CD to DVD, or CD to digital code), an update in

curriculum focus from the state education bodies as a direct response to student performance in exams (NAPLAN, state Year 12 exams), or government direction.

Curriculums are dynamic and undergo continual change.

Publishers work on a four-year process to publish a textbook, and while minor revisions are easily catered to, wholesale change as we've had with the National Curriculum can send this process into chaos. Publishers carefully manage stock levels to avoid being left with unsalable books before the curriculum changes and moves to the next cycle, whilst ensuring adequate resources are available to schools when they are needed. Schools on the whole are very mindful of their families/students, and do their best to provide value.

Your child's position in this four-year process will determine how many new editions you'll encounter along the way, and if it is worthwhile for you to retain textbooks from one sibling to another.

\$\$ savings tip: *when your child is finished with the book, sell it second-hand and bank the money. Should your next child need it, which is remote, just buy it back second-hand – there will be plenty of copies available as the book has been around a number of years and you may even buy it back cheaper than what you sold yours for.*

University Textbooks

University textbooks are expensive and edition changes can be yearly. Resource lists are usually not structured and might be provided in an enrolment package, posted on a faculty noticeboard or simply the lecturer's door a few days before classes begin. Often lecturers are authors of their own subject's textbook/s, and sometimes the listed required textbooks are not even used in class (they are added only as additional resources).

\$\$ savings tip: *connecting with students during O Week who have completed the subjects or year levels of the same course your child is undertaking will provide insight to what resources are important, along with the possibility of obtaining second-hand textbooks. Also check out the library and library resources – borrowings and downloads may be sufficient for some subjects instead of purchasing textbooks outright, or may help defer the purchases until funds are available. Get in early to borrow/reserve library books – as soon as the texts for the subject are known.*

Quote: *"Listen up, you couch potatoes: each recycled beer can saves enough electricity to run a television for three hours." – Denis Hayes (Environmentalist and early proponent of solar power, he founded the Earth Day Network)*

Many campuses have second-hand services – information will available from your university's website or by contacting Student Services. There are online trading platforms such as Sustainable School Shop and Student VIP that can assist in finding second-hand textbooks easily. Textbooks can also be rented:

- Jekkle: <http://www.jekkle.com.au/>
- The Campus Bookstore: <http://www.thecampusbookstore.com/Category/Rental>

Booklists – Primary

Primary school students' texts are customarily workbooks that are written in and should not be traded. Some schools do start adding novels at Year 5 as an introduction to text studies, and may have one or two other subject texts, however this is uncommon. Most primary level students will engage in reading programmes through their school library and most resources are provided.

If you do have a couple of primary subject texts or workbooks that are not written in, then do list them for sale as they will sell.

\$\$ savings tip: *for avid readers, additional reading resources can be topped up through local council libraries and your school's library.*

Booklists – Secondary

Secondary school is where the cost of textbooks and resource lists comes to the fore, as does the cost for uniform and school fees.

Schools' book/resource lists normally arrive home from schools from mid-November onwards, at a time when families are busy preparing for Christmas and other end of year activities. This timing could not be worse as families that are already stressed can feel overwhelmed.

If you are financially burdened and need further assistance, contact your School's Welfare Officer or Registrar – do not be embarrassed, they should be very understanding and are there to help.

Some states start certain year levels at the beginning of Term 4 instead of start of February. 'Early start' year levels receive their new booklists usually in September. These schools can provide advice regarding which books will be needed to be purchased immediately and which can be deferred into the new calendar year.

Traditionally early start year levels have had little opportunity to purchase second-hand textbooks as the current year level above will still be using their texts until December.

\$\$ savings tip: *early start year levels will find good stock of second-hand texts on the Sustainable School Shop. Please remember, once the text is finished with, advertise for sale on the Sustainable School Shop, but do expect that the text may not sell until the following September.*

Booklist Order Deadlines

Remain calm, I have never known a book supplier to say NO to a book order even after the order deadline; ignore any 'or else' message or financial penalty, should your order be running late. There are many book suppliers that can fill your order, remember you are the customer, and to gain your custom they need to be obliging, not dictatorial. Some book suppliers may offer discounts for early orders, but 'late fees' are simply silly! Lodge your order when it is best for you.

Increasingly book suppliers are providing online ordering facilities that do not have order deadlines but simply state it takes between 5-14 days for your order to be delivered.

Any suggestion that you may miss out on your textbook, or the textbook will be delayed and not be available when school starts, is a commonly used tactic to pressure you to order early – ignore it and don't give this any further thought. Yes, a number of books may be unavailable at the time of your order, but the book would be unavailable for all book suppliers if the publisher is running late with printing the book.

\$\$ savings tip: *book suppliers vary considerably on new book price and postage costs, significant savings on new textbooks can be made.*

For those textbooks you need to purchase new, the key information that will allow you to find the cheapest new books is the books' ISBN (International Standard Book Number). This is the fingerprint of the book and you'll need this for each new book you intend to buy. Most schools' booklists do not provide each book's ISBN.

Sustainable School Shop identifies exactly the correct texts needed, be they second-hand or new. The ISBN for your required texts can be found on the Sustainable School Shop website.

Alternatively, many book suppliers offer a very good returns policy that will enable you to order your texts, and continue to search for second-hand in the meantime, handing back those new texts no longer needed on collection for a full refund – check the returns policy with your supplier and contact them if you are unclear as to their terms.

Trap for the unwary: *it is common for a significant new book order to be delivered in 2-3 instalments as the supplier may need to wait for some of the items. Some suppliers will charge a significant \$15-25 delivery fee for each parcel and/or per student, while other suppliers have a single delivery fee (\$5-10) that covers the whole order no matter how many parcels may be delivered.*

Second-hand Textbooks

CAREFULLY go through your new booklist and retain those current year textbooks that are required for the coming year.

\$\$ savings tip: *the question I often hear is "Is it really worth going to the trouble of buying and selling second-hand textbooks?" I can unreservedly say "YES!"*

Each year I have purchased my textbooks second-hand and I have enjoyed significant savings for little time spent – in most cases about 15 minutes to find the correct texts and about half an hour to collect them saving over \$200. Combined this with the books that I have sold second-hand and I have come out way in front (\$300-400 in total). Even not selling one book of my own, purchasing second-hand books for time spent is a no-brainer.

The reality is November/December is one of the busiest times for everyone; our family has vacations every Christmas period from Boxing Day returning two days before schools starts. I usually try to find second-hand texts before I depart and order online over the holiday period for the remainder of the books I need. When I get back (two days before school starts) I have lined up any remaining second-hand texts to collect and if I have placed a new textbook order, it's waiting for me. My child has always turned up to school with all the necessary resource materials on the first day. Most schools will cringe when I say this, but even if I was unable to get all my books for Day 1 of school, is it such a tragedy? Yes, the sun will still shine and I am sure my child will not be disadvantaged and any outstanding books will be found/picked up or purchased over the following few days.

So really, why do most people find this process difficult? The answer is simple: most book suppliers and publishers are interested in selling you a new book and will provide only basic information on the booklists, leading to families feeling uncertain and therefore reluctant to try, in fear of purchasing the wrong book. Booklists will also have commentary such as 'New' for the year, meaning simply a new text to the school, not necessarily a new edition.

In-school Book-Swaps

If your school has an in-school service for second-hand textbooks, check to see if the dates and times work with your busy schedule. If you are selling books through your school's service, be mindful that some schools retain the unsold books to on-forward to charities as a donation, and your unsold books may not be returned. Whilst schools do make considerable efforts to ensure the editions on sale at their book swaps are correct, there can be occasions when inadvertently incorrect books are bought and sold.

In-school book swaps are common and are supported, but they can be quite competitive, only operate on a single day of the year and the market to buy and sell texts is restricted to your school.

\$\$ savings tip: *support your school's book swap, but for any unsold books or others you still require, use the Sustainable School Shop website.*

Sustainable School Shop (www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au)

Approximately 300 secondary schools use the Sustainable School Shop website as their formal second-hand service, with many more families from other schools coming to use the service too. As Australia's largest resource for secondary textbooks, it provides specialised functionality for second-hand textbook trading that's unavailable elsewhere. Most significantly, the website is available to buy and sell texts 365 days per year, as students change schools or subjects throughout the year and many families only find time to buy/sell texts once their holidays start in December.

Sustainable School Shop uploads each school's textbook/booklist information to the website which takes the guesswork out of purchasing the correct texts, then matches buyers and sellers making searching for multiple books very easy. There are buttons which show the cheapest books or 'which seller has the most books' you need. On the selling side, the system automatically generates most of the For Sale Ad and presents a pricing guide, then

takes your For Sale Ad and matches it to existing Wanted Ads and sends the prospective buyer an email notification.

\$\$ savings tip: *for families that find their booklist is not available, just click on the 'Contact Us' link on the website to let us know and Sustainable School Shop will upload your textbook/booklist.*

Trap for the unwary: *when using other trading platforms or your own networks, be aware that you will have to decipher the textbook/booklist information. Some titles for textbooks, especially in the senior year levels, will have the same title – for example Accounting Units 1 & 2 may have five publishers with this title and be five different books.*

Other trading websites that may assist: Student VIP; Gumtree; Ebay; Local Buy, Swap and Sell; etc. If using these services, obtain the ISBN information first so you know which are the correct books to buy.

eBooks

Over the past four years, most publishers have standardised their eBook licencing to either the life of the book, or four one-year licences with scratch codes contained in the cover of the text. Most publishers provide a PDF copy of the text without further cost. These textbooks can be traded second-hand with the second owner using the second scratch code etc, or simply the eBook just continues to work for each subsequent owner.

Most digital media accompanying textbooks is a PDF copy of the textbook and is classed by schools as an additional resource which is helpful for students but not essential.

Interactive digital programs such as *HotMaths* and *StudyOn* are a yearly licence and are not transferable to a second owner, most cost approximately \$15-40 and can be purchased online directly from the publisher.

Trap for the unwary: *if interactive digital content is a pre-requisite for the subject, it will be clearly noted on the booklist that you receive. If in doubt, ask your school.*

Using Sustainable School Shop website for second-hand textbooks

Selling

- When you receive your new booklist get your second-hand books home and ready for sale as early as possible.
- Most textbook trading will occur from November to the end of January; outside these dates trading activity does continue albeit at significantly lower levels.
- Books For Sale that don't sell but are still listed For Sale will be the first stock sold come the next trading period commencing in October.
- **Trading tip:** *wipe down covers and remove where possible internal marks and annotations. Covers of textbooks with plastic coatings can be freshened by wiping*

over with a few drops of surface cleaner (or similar) on a damp cloth which will remove most ingrained dust and dirt. This is a great way to freshen up covers before selling, or to improve the appearance of the cover when purchased second-hand.

- If the book is still being used, list the book For Sale ASAP and place in your For Sale Ad the 'Availability Date'. This is when the book is no longer needed and will be available for pick-up, and enables you to pre-arrange the sale.
- Go to the Sustainable School Shop website, and start by registering/logging in and clicking 'Sell Books' then follow the prompts.
- If you are selling books that are not shown on the booklist, click 'Create Ads' and follow the prompts.
- You will be required to gauge condition – a guide will be presented but be descriptive and fair.
- You will be required to price your book; a guide will be presented.
- **Trading tip:** *always price your textbooks as what you would be prepared to pay if you were buying it. The book may be in pristine condition, but most people purchasing second-hand books are price conscious and are looking for cost savings.*
- Once your ads are listed others will see them and the system constantly matches them to new buyers.
- Prospective buyers will contact you. Simply arrange a mutually convenient method and time to trade. Most trading will be with families from your school.
- Sustainable School Shop is not involved in the trade transaction but does run very good helplines should you have a question or require assistance.
- Once your book sells, log back into the Sustainable School Shop website and delist its ad. This is important.
- **Trading tip:** *print out a listing of your For Sale ads and place with the books in a box and place in the cupboard. When a buyer rings you will have everything at your fingertips that you need.*

Buying

- Once you've received your booklist, check for those books you currently have and need to retain.
- Go to the Sustainable School Shop website, and start by registering/logging in. Make sure you have nominated your school during the registration process otherwise the system won't know which booklists to display.

- Click 'Find Books', follow the prompts and get to the Advanced Search Summary. At this point there are probably lots of book matches. If you already have an annual subscription click 'Who has Most of my Items' to see if anyone has all your required books, or click 'Cheapest' to see those (see image below). For those books not found the system has listed your Wanted Ads and will send you an email as soon as a seller lists a matching text for sale.

Kambrya College 2016 Book List - Year 8	Exact Matches	Close Matches	Delist
Macquarie Pocket Dictionary 4th edn plus Bonus Thesaurus	No matches	1 close	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Call Me Ishmael (P/B)	4 exact	38 close	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two Weeks With The Queen	6 exact	5 close	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography Alive & History Alive 3 AC (Text & eBookPLUS)	No matches	No matches	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ni Hao 2 - Text / Online Lab (Elementary Lvl)	No matches	15 close	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ni Hao 2 - Workbook (Elementary Lvl)	2 exact	6 close	<input type="checkbox"/>

- **Trading tip:** wait for these Ad Match emails and don't feel you have to take the books from the first Ad Match email – you will receive many Ad Match emails across the trading period. Pick which seller best suits you.
- People who list Wanted Ads will get first choice of any newly listed books, as the system automatically sends the Ad Match emails each day, while people manually searching for free cannot access any ads that have been listed in the last 48 hours.
- Always set your ad match distance to at least 100km as your school's catchment is usually that size as a minimum. Remember it's your choice which books you buy; it's good to see all the ads going by because some of them may just suit you better.
- Contact sellers by SMS or telephone rather than emailing, as most use junk email addresses in their ads and people do not check their emails regularly.
- If the seller does not respond to your inquiry in a timely fashion, move on to a different seller and don't take to heart. Families at this time of year are all busy and sometimes do not respond as quickly as they usually would.
- If you are very particular about condition, request the seller send a SMS a photo of the covers, spine, and an example of what they consider to be the page with the most marks and annotations as a guide.
- **Trading tip:** when making arrangements for collection, do not make special trips, but fit in around your normal comings and goings. If you find that the book on offer is not in suitable condition when sighted, remember there is no commitment to purchase, simply thank the person for their time, or renegotiate price that you feel is appropriate for the condition.

- Be patient, and all will be fine – it is not a race to see who can get the books the quickest. There will be ample books for you to choose from, so don't stress about missing out. I find a nice cuppa and frozen Tim Tams (the dark chocolate variety especially) make the process rather enjoyable. I have met many lovely people along the way, and my experience is that it is convenient, easy, and does fit in with busy lives.

Manually searching for books to buy

- The Sustainable School Shop website provides families the ability to register and search the For Sale Ads, gaining the contact details for free.
- The Sustainable School Shop search engine is keystroke sensitive, which means each character entered into the search bar will refine and reduce the search results. Keep your first search as wide as possible by only using one or two keywords and then slowly refine your search. Keep your search distance as unlimited and only reduce in later searches.
- Books For Sale don't have their titles standardised. This means that when manually searching by book title, a number of books will always be missed. Additionally, it can be very difficult to determine the correct book between the different editions. Often searching by title will display the wrong book or provide nil search results even when the correct books are listed For Sale.
- All books For Sale are standardised by ISBN (International Standard Book Number). When manually searching, use the ISBN number as it's the best way to find all the correct books that are currently listed for sale.
- Additionally, searching for free will show all books For Sale except those that have been listed For Sale within the last 48 hours. To see these books you'll need an Annual Subscription or Premium Search Subscription or to list Wanted Ads.
- Premium Search and Annual Subscriptions provides access to:
 - ISBN numbers for textbooks on booklists
 - Books listed For Sale within the last 48 hours
 - Show Members other Ads
 - Improved search filtering tools: Latest Listed, Condition, Cheapest
- To access the ISBN numbers: register/log in to the Sustainable School Shop website, upgrade to Premium Search or an Annual Subscription, then click 'View Booklists', and 'Show Info' on each book you're searching for.

\$\$ savings tip: purchase the previous year's annual checkpoints and exam study guides cheaply and second-hand. Then download the prior year's Year 12 exams from the State Curriculum Board/Authority for free. Each State's Curriculum Board may also have available a selection of 'Good Answers' from the previous year's exams published – these are also free, and a great resource for revision.

- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>
- Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards NSW: <https://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>
- Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority: <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/>
- Western Australian School Curriculum and Standards Authority: <http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au/>
- South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework: <http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au>
South Australian Certificate of Education: <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au>
- Tasmanian Curriculum: <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/Students/schools-colleges/curriculum/Pages/Tasmanian-Curriculum.aspx>
Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification: <http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au>
- Northern Territory School Curriculum: <https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/nt-school-curriculum>

\$\$ savings tip: *many textbooks such as dictionaries, atlases, language verb wheels, language glossaries, 'Mathomats', etc do not change substantially when updated to the next edition, and previous versions will be acceptable. In these cases, cover the book in a non-transparent contact – not even the other kids in the class will know the difference.*

\$\$ savings tip: *some study guides such as StudyOn have a digital and print copy, whereby the online is not much more than a PDF of the printed book. Check if your teacher uses the online feedback/assessment contained within the guide that is interactive, or if they are just using as a PDF copy for revision. If using as a PDF copy, purchase the printed book second-hand; you'll get it very cheaply.*

\$\$ savings tip: *most teachers do not mind which print run of novels that you use, as they teach by chapters rather than page numbers. If a particular edition or print run is required, most schools will denote this clearly on the booklist. I always laugh when I see novels listed on the booklist citing an edition number when you are fully aware the author passed away many years ago.*

Trap for the unwary: *plays are different, and it is prudent to follow the edition carefully. These texts can often have adaptations and variations depending on the publisher/editor, and many teachers do rely on the page, scene, and line number when teaching. Plays often contain study notes and additional resources which can vary between editions in response to the curriculum and curriculum focus.*

12. Uniforms

Most primary schools have a compulsory uniform, customarily – school dresses, basic shorts, trousers, polos, track pants, and windcheaters. School hats are compulsory over the summer months (sun-safe school programmes). Items of uniform may be plain (generic), or include the school's logo on the garment.

Many independent and secondary schools' uniform lists are often more substantial and structured, and include items such as blazers, specialised sports and extra-curricular items. There may be different uniforms for junior, middle and senior years, with additional apparel for the final senior year such as Year 12 ties, jumper and vests as well as graduation apparel. Many of the uniform items have the school logo and cannot be substituted with a generic item.

Increasingly, schools are changing their uniform on a more regular basis wishing to instil a sense of pride in their students' appearance by having the students' uniform standards the highest possible. Additionally, technology is driving changes in all aspects of our lives and schools are of course reflective of this; ongoing changes in manufacturing techniques, fabrics, fashion, and the curriculum are all contributing to this trend. Whilst for some families this may cause consternation, most schools try to be considerate and offer flexible transitional arrangements.

School uniform suppliers pride themselves on the use of quality fabrics in their uniforms, providing longevity in their garments that will outlast a single student's wear, and remain in suitable condition to trade second-hand.

Schools provide additional information regarding their uniform in their Student Handbooks, online or enrolment packages; this is your best guide and recommendation for what you will require.

Second-hand uniform services in school may be run by the uniform shop/supplier or by school or Parents and Friends groups. Check with your school.

Sustainable School Shop is increasingly being used by schools as their formal in-school second-hand uniform service.

Sustainable School Shop second-hand uniform trading system provides schools and families a very easy and effective service to use. Benefits include the 'second-hand uniform stocktake report' and an ability for families to quickly see which items of uniform are current and can or cannot be worn when buying second-hand.

Buying and selling second-hand uniform items is very popular and very significant savings can be made. In some schools a full new uniform fit-out for one student can cost upwards of \$1,500. Needless to say this brings a tear to many eyes and a search for other options.

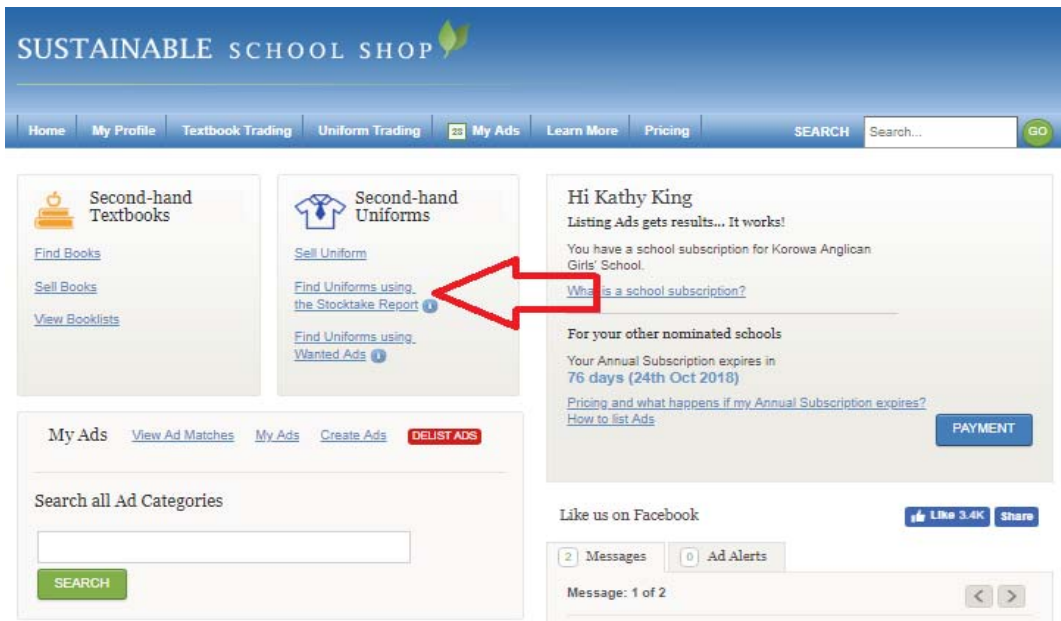
Using Sustainable School Shop website for second-hand uniforms

Selling

- Most uniform trading occurs at school year start, end and the two changes of season. Outside these dates trading activity does continue, just at lower levels.
- Second-hand uniforms trading frequency is different to other types of items, for example some items will sell instantly while a winter pinafore listed for sale in November may not sell until the following September. At times, the trading frequency is logical, but sometimes not.
- **Trading tip:** *launder the items first that you wish to sell. It's important to freshen the items up and present them in the best possible way. Remember you will be trading with another parent at your school.*
- Go to the Sustainable School Shop website, and start by registering/logging in and clicking 'Sell Uniform' then follow the prompts.
- If you are selling uniform items that are not shown on the uniform list, click 'Create Ads' and follow the prompts.
- You will be required to gauge condition – a guide will be presented but be descriptive and fair.
- **Trading tip:** *you will be required to price your item; a guide will be presented. Always price your items as what you would be prepared to pay if you were buying it. The uniform may be in pristine condition, but most people purchasing second-hand uniform are price conscious and are looking for cost savings.*
- Once your ads are listed, others will see them and the system constantly matches them to new buyers.
- Prospective buyers will contact you. Simply arrange a mutually convenient method and time to trade. Most trading will be with families from your school.
- Sustainable School Shop is not involved in the trade transaction but does run very good helplines should you have a question or require assistance.
- When an item sells, log back into the Sustainable School Shop website and delist its ad. This is important.
- **Trading tip:** *uniform items of less common sizes are always in strong demand.*
- **Trading tip:** *if your uniform items have not sold after 9 months, try dropping the asking price. It is a competitive marketplace.*

Buying

- Go to the Sustainable School Shop website, and start by registering/logging in. Make sure you have nominated your school during the registration process otherwise the system won't know which uniform list to display.
- When searching for uniforms, use the blue 'Stocktake' button (see image below). It's a summary (categorised by the school's uniform list) of all the current second-hand uniform items that are for sale on the Sustainable School Shop website.



- When using the Stocktake report simply click on the items shown – this is an excellent way of searching for items.
- To list Wanted Ads and use the Advanced Search Summary, click 'Find Uniforms' and follow the prompts. At this point there are probably lots of matches. If you already have an annual subscription click 'Who has Most of my Items' to see if anyone has all your required uniform pieces, or click 'Cheapest' to see those. For those items not found and at this point, the system has listed your Wanted Ads and will send you an email as soon as a seller lists For Sale a matching item. Wait for these Ad Match emails and don't feel you have to take the items from the first Ad Match email. Pick which seller best suits your needs.
- People who list Wanted Ads will get first choice of any newly listed items, as the system automatically sends the Ad Match emails each day.
- Always set your ad match distance to at least 100km as your school's catchment is usually that size as a minimum. For boarding schools, set the distance as unlimited. Remember it's your choice which items you buy; it's good to see all the ads going by because some of them may just suit you better.

- Contact sellers by SMS or telephone rather than emailing, as most use junk email addresses in their ads and people do not check their emails regularly.
- If the seller does not respond to your inquiry in a timely fashion, move on to a different seller and don't take to heart. Families are all busy and sometimes do not respond as quickly as they usually would.
- If you are very particular about condition, request the seller send a SMS a photo of the item.
- When making arrangements for collection, do not make special trips, but fit in around your normal comings and goings. If you find the item on offer is not in suitable condition when sighted, remember there is no commitment to purchase, simply thank the person for their time, or renegotiate price that you feel is appropriate for the condition.

Manually searching for uniform items to buy

- The Sustainable School Shop website provides families with the ability to register and search the For Sale Ads, gaining the contact details for free.
- The Sustainable School Shop search engine is keystroke sensitive, which means each character entered into the search bar will refine and reduce the search results. Keep your first search as wide as possible by only using 1 or 2 keywords and then slowly refine your search. Keep your search distance as unlimited and only reduce in later searches.
- The best way to search and see what's for sale is the second-hand uniform Stocktake report (see image above). When using the Stocktake report simply click on the items shown.
- People searching manually including via the Stocktake will not be able to access any items listed within the last 48 hours. They will appear as items on the Stocktake but access is not available until the item has been listed for more than 48 hours.
- Go to the Sustainable School Shop website, and start by registering/logging-in. Make sure you have nominated your school during the registration process otherwise the system won't know which school's uniform list to display.

Second-hand stock levels of uniform vary considerably across sizing, so be patient. If you find limited second-hand uniform available, purchase only the minimum new and continue to search for second-hand items.

\$\$ savings tip: *for maximum savings, I always try to purchase as much of the uniform I can second-hand, and top up with new.*

Trading tip: *when purchasing second-hand, carefully examine the uniform items ensuring that there is no excessive pilling of the fabric, there are no stains, holes or tears, stitching*

and hems are in good order, and there is at least a year's wear remaining in the garment. Always take special note on elbows and knees for wear – if the fabric is shiny in these areas, it is usually an indication of excessive wear and thinning, and is not a good purchase.

Trading tip: *blazers often will have wear on the elbows, sleeve ends, and can thin over the shoulders and upper back area.*

Trading tip: *sports polos and rugby jumpers can fade quite quickly, so be mindful that you are happy with their appearance and colour.*

Trading tip: *second-hand uniforms can be freshened by soaking in laundry soaker to remove greying from laundered shirts and summer dresses, and increase brightness in colour (always refer to instructions on the label as to suitability of this product for the uniform fabric type). In addition, ironing aids can assist by providing more body and crispness to shirts, dresses and skirts.*

Trading tip: *blazers, wool kilts and wool skirts can be given new life by a good dry clean and press. Small holes and tears can be easily blind mended – your dry-cleaner or local garment alteration service will be able to provide further advice, if you are not handy with a needle and thread.*

Trading tip: *uniform shops/suppliers have spare buttons, pinafore bibs, and blazer pockets for those that need replacing. Pilling on jumpers and fabric can be quickly removed by using a de-piller (available from haberdashery stores).*

Trading tip: *school bags can be wiped and cleaned with products such as surface cleaner to remove ingrained dirt, and fabric deodoriser will remove any musty lingering smells. Zips on bags can be maintained and kept running smoothly with the help of silicone spray.*

Other online options are Gumtree; Facebook; Buy, Swap and Sell; etc. These will usually provide poorer outcomes as they don't provide the same level of functionality and all families at the school are not focused into the platform. Trading outcomes may be ad-hoc.

\$\$ savings tip: *for those families who cannot find suitable second-hand items and are having trouble with financing a new uniform, contact your school's welfare officer. They will be able to provide assistance and let you know what options are available – some schools offer short-term uniform rental program, or the school's unclaimed lost property basket may provide helpful items. In addition, many schools will accept a generic item in the interim – Big W, K-Mart and Target all have good ranges of generic school wear that is of reasonable quality at very competitive prices. Other specialty school wear retailers may also be worthwhile.*

\$\$ savings tip: *there may be lay-by and other payment options available from your supplier. For additional savings, look for discount offers for early purchase of uniform, clearance items, and sales across the year. Schools' newsletters will provide further information about uniform promotions/discounts across the year.*

Quote: “The recycling in my house was imposed by my kids” – Antonio Banderas (Actor)

13. Calculators

Many of the new CAS graphing calculators are expensive and definitely worthwhile purchasing second-hand. Things to be mindful of: screens can become unreliable after four years with little indication of failing; batteries also can fail without warning regardless of age.

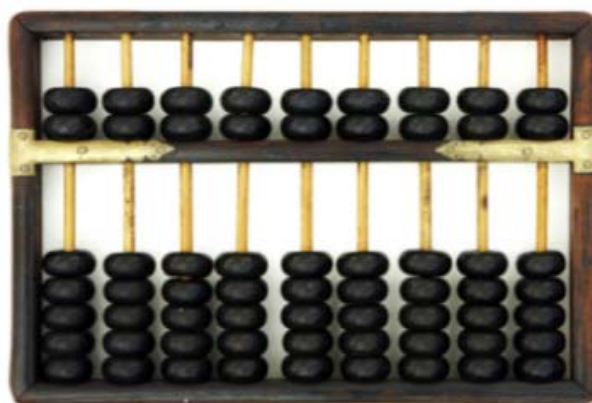
Trap for the unwary: when purchasing these calculators second-hand, ensure that the calculator is working and there are no scratches on the screen. **Switch it on and check.** Make sure the stylus, protective case, cables and operation manual are included. If you do have a battery that is failing, wrap the battery in a watertight bag and place in the freezer for a couple of hours – as with phone batteries it may spring the battery back to life. Replacement batteries are readily available and priced around the \$20 mark. If the operation manual is missing, these can also be downloaded from the manufacturer’s website.

\$\$ savings tip: other second-hand calculators often can be found online too and will save you approximately half the retail price. New graphing calculators can cost \$200-250.

There are a number of specialist retailers such as Abacus and Calculator King to name a few that provide competitive pricing on new calculators and specialist advice (check online for options). Many general stationers now are also stocking these specialised calculators – check locally as they may also have special offers.

Your school may also have an arrangement for the supply of calculators for their students at discounted pricing – refer back to your school if this is the case.

Trap for the unwary: if purchasing a new graphing calculator, ensure that you complete the manufacturer warranty – this is important for any future warranty issue, and the resale of your calculator.



Good grief.... Where’s the screen and there’s no spot for the power!

14. Musical Instruments

Students begin their introduction to music in the primary years and will try different musical instruments usually before they gravitate to one in particular, or totally lose their enthusiasm for playing and give up altogether. Schools are fully aware of this fickle nature, and assist families usually through an instrument hire/loan system within their school. Local music stores and suppliers often offer a loan/hire program too, and are able to assist where instruments may not be available through the school's own programs.

\$\$ savings tip: *if you are looking to purchase, it is well worthwhile to look at a second-hand instrument before the need to purchase new. There is a great range of instruments on the secondary market that are ideal for introductory instruments, and are of high value and quality. Do your homework and involve your music teacher. Your child's teacher will be able to provide invaluable advice as to which instrument, size, and brand/style best suits. Second-hand sales of instruments often will also include other accessories such as cases, sheet music, and playing paraphernalia just thrown in. This can save you literally hundreds, if not thousands of dollars.*

If you are looking for sheet music, check out second-hand as well. Many students sell on their sheet music when they move on to different music levels and exams, or decide not to continue. Do not bother with music workbooks unless it is clearly stated that they are unused. Places to look are: your local music instrument store, Sustainable School Shop, Gumtree, eBay.

15. Stationery

Good savings can be gained by carefully going through what stationery items your children have brought home at the end of the school year.

\$\$ savings tip: *go through all the pencil cases and exercise books/folders to find what is reusable on the following year's listing. Often school's resource lists request multiples of items that are simply not needed. In the past, we have bought 6 glue sticks as indicated on the resource list, only to find that two were needed, so if faced with multiples of glue sticks, and those types of consumables, simply purchase one or two and buy as you go. Exercise books can often have only a couple of pages written in, and can be reused for the following year. Stationery items for second semester subjects/electives can be deferred to that time of year rather than purchasing early (remember to retain your booklist to refer back to).*

Your booklist stationer probably won't be as competitive in pricing as large retail discounters. Other retailers such as Officeworks, Officemax and Office Choice stock specifically for school stationery and may be cheaper.

\$\$ savings tip: *for added savings try K-Mart, Big W and the Supermarkets – these discounters also stock ranges of product lines similar in styling to a number of branded fancier stationers such as Smiggle, Kikki K and Typo. 'Back to School' sales from newsagents and office suppliers often have specials around mid-January that provide*

additional savings, especially on items such as visual art diaries, project books and folders, which they need to clear. Other discount retailers such as \$2 shops also have back to school items available at that time of year too.

16. Computers/Tablets

Computers and tablets are usually not good value to buy second-hand, unless under two years old. It is the same old story: technology is moving quickly and by the time you have the latest model out of the shop, it is already considered outdated. Most second-hand refurbished computers are not much different in price to purchasing a new computer off the shelf. *Choice* has some great articles regarding purchasing a new device that may assist as follows:

- <https://www.choice.com.au/electronics-and-technology/tablets-and-personal-media-devices/tablets/buying-guides/back-to-school-tech>
- <https://www.choice.com.au/electronics-and-technology/computers/desktop-and-laptop-computers/buying-guides/laptops>

To find great savings, you are best to keep an eye on the major retailers (Harvey Norman, JB Hi Fi) and work out exactly what your requirements in computer hardware that you need. If you are not born in the tech revolution, ask around at the retail outlets and familiarise yourself with the terminology, and what it means.

\$\$ savings tip: *aim for as much RAM and computer speed that you can afford; the saving here is improving the longevity of the device.*

Most laptops have a life of approximately three to four years, with annual maintenance and servicing to remove dust, the life of your device will extend – laptops will slow over time even with good maintenance and defragging.

Tablets are evolving with increased memory and screen clarity. Ongoing updates in their operating systems have meant that earlier models may not run some applications as they do not have the capacity to download the newer cookies, and will return a cookie error. The screens are quite stable and most screen issues have been due to damage rather than failure.

\$\$ savings tip: *the computer market is extremely competitive and good savings can be found by shopping around, with great specials reducing prices by up to 50% on run-out deals. If you are in the market for a device it pays to get organised early, and understand exactly the specifications that you need. Schools will provide guidance to the minimums that are required; if you are unsure, check back with your school. Once that is established, it is a matter of constantly checking the retailers, and models that are on special. Don't be in a hurry to purchase as it often pays to be patient and wait – new models are being released constantly and no retailer likes to hold stock, so this is where you have a significant*

advantage. My laptop was reduced by over \$800 in just three months as it was the last one they had in stock! Don't be afraid to haggle but be reasonable in your expectations.

For those families struggling to finance a device, contact your school – they will be able to provide further options such as loan devices, or may have arrangements with a supplier for rentals or purchasing on a payment plan.

Other online retailers to check out:

- <https://www.mwave.com.au>
- <http://www.cplonline.com.au>
- <http://www.jwcomputers.com.au>
- <http://www.techbuy.com.au>

17. Internet and Mobile Telephones

What would we do without the internet? It is now hard to imagine, but internet access is an integral part of everyday school life. Most schools now assume that their students will have access to the internet at home, and will be able to access the school's online resources. This can present problems to families that live in areas where the internet services are slow, are on satellite with delays, have mobile data with drop outs or limited data, or have no access at all.

When purchasing internet data plans, remember young people chew through phenomenal amounts of data, and going over your monthly data allowance can incur significant additional costs. Shop around as there are new plans being released all the time, and there are many providers.

Mobile phones are no different to the internet, it pays to shop around, be aware of call and data charges, and take your time to find the correct plan to meet your needs.

One question I have been asked, "What age is the right age for your child to have access to a mobile phone?" That is difficult and will depend entirely on you. Most children now pester their parents for their own smart phone, and yes it is a smart phone that they would like. I can only say go with what you feel is the right time for your own child, if they are responsibly able to manage phone calls and data, and you are confident they understand cyber safety, and will use the phone appropriately.

Always monitor their usage and provide guidelines, and remind and modify as you go. From our experience, do expect the occasional 'take a deep breath' phone bill, but on the whole we have found that it has been a valued life lesson for our child.

The following passage is of an interview with Steve Wozniak (Apple Co-founder) on the ABC Lateline program in 2015.⁸

MATT WORDSWORTH: "Apple just turned 40. Are you surprised at how dominant computers have been when they've been combined with the connectivity of the internet and have you ever told your kids to - ever told your kids to get off their damn phones?"

STEVE WOZNIAK: (Laughs) "I would never tell a kid to get off their phones. Any kid doing anything technical, addicted to a computer, addicted to a game, no, let them find go and find themselves in the world. Don't force your values on them. So I'm - I'm maybe rare as a parent that way. As far as how far computers have gone in our lives, unbelievable. Hard to imagine it when you didn't believe there'd be enough memory for a song in the computer, you didn't imagine there would be an internet, you didn't imagine there'd be cell phones, you didn't imagine that cellular could eventually carry the internet data and become as fast as it is. So broadband plus internet, those were very hard things to imagine. We did imagine that everyone would have - almost everyone in the world could have a computer helping them with some of the things in their daily life. So we did envision it to be very, very big and huge. And what surprises me about Apple turning 40 is we didn't know anything about business. We didn't know that companies don't make it to 40. They change their name, they get bought out, they die off, you know? So - but we just thought you start a company; if it's successful, it lasts for a hundred years. So we're the rare case. We're actually the rare case that did."

18. Extra-Curricular Activities and Sports

Most children will engage in extra-curricular activities, commonly these include sports, dance, Guides, Scouts, art classes, languages, music, choir, with many more on offer. These activities provide valuable learning and socialisation experiences, and often are the reason many families feel that they live in their car, with constant drop-offs and pick-ups after school and over the weekend.

Extra-curricular/sporting activities may be offered through schools with a subsidised school or state school program, or by scholarship and enrichment programs that will incur a small fee additional to the normal school fee structure. These programs usually provide great value for families as schools' resources are utilised, with only payment of staff time and consumables needing to be met.

Outside providers will have additional costs such as venue hire, equipment, staff, running costs, and consumables that will naturally add to the cost of the activity and be included in their charges.

\$\$ savings tip: *uniforms and/or other specialised materials may also need to be purchased, and usually will be outlined in the enrolment or information packages. Be mindful, an activity*

⁸ Interview with ABC's Lateline's Matt Wordsworth and Steve Wozniak
URL-<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2015/s4445491.htm>

on first glance may seem reasonable but when the associated costs are taken into account, can amount to quite a sizeable bill.

Trap for the unwary: *other requirements may include compulsory volunteer time that many busy parents may not be able to accommodate, compulsory car-pooling, or constant travel that may be local or further afield.*

Most children will gravitate naturally to activities that their friends from school are engaged in, and this often assists with networking for second-hand items, car-pooling, and options for pick-ups and drop-offs. Always check the range of activities on offer from your school as these are usually subsidised, and provide excellent value. Spend time researching and asking questions about how much time is involved, supervision and safety, insurances, and any special events that may require travel or additional costs. Ask about cancellation fees in the case that you do not wish continue, or your child suffers an illness or injury. Many providers now offer flexible payment options that allow for weekly payments, rather than the lump sum term/annual payment.

\$\$ savings tip: *trial periods are a godsend and a huge money saver – Even if not mentioned, always ask – the worst thing they can say is no. If this option is available, take full advantage as it will provide time for your child to experience the activity and gauge whether it is suitable, they enjoy it, and they would like to continue – without purchasing uniforms, materials and other program requirements. Trial periods will usually be over one to three weeks and be priced week-by-week before a larger commitment is requested.*

Always keep an eye on local hubs and community centres websites for special offers and short courses in a range of different activities. The various Sports' codes run junior clinics and skills sessions that are inexpensive and a great introduction to the sport for younger players, without the added cost of uniforms. In addition there are sponsored programs/sports scholarships available for participants that show early promise – the different codes and sporting associations will have further information about requirements and access to these programmes.

Councils invest in leisure and recreation activities for their communities, and can provide a wealth of information about local clubs, activities and venues. They also offer advice and assistance for families with special needs, and are a great resource for great local programmes that are reasonable in cost. State governments also provide programmes for the performing arts with supporting resources that can be found on the Department of Education websites in each state.

If you have undertaken an activity and find that you are no longer in a position to continue, contact the organisation immediately and explain your situation – be assured most will be flexible and provide options. In the worst case scenario – no refund or you may be required to pay a small cancellation payment in place of the full fee, or have part of your initial fee refunded.

Most organisations make provisions for second-hand trading of uniforms and equipment, and assist families with these types of items.

Trap for the unwary: *there will be cases whereby the activity is either too expensive or too onerous. Families may feel pressured to enrol their child – this can be school-led or child-led, or it could be pressure from other families or peers. Do what is best for your family and your circumstance, saying “no” is perfectly fine.*

My daughter at one stage was very interested in cheerleading with many of her friends, and on first glance I was quite happy to proceed, until it was mentioned that the club she was interested in joining only uses costumes direct from the USA. The costumes in question cost approximately \$1,000–\$2,000 per outfit, with two required per year for competitions (no kidding!). I knew of a family whose daughter was attending the club, and when I contacted her Mum about these requirements, she confirmed indeed that was the case. My daughter continued with dance instead; perfectly happy with her leotards, her friends, and her one costume for the end of year concert.

19. Extra-Curricular Academic Tutoring

Tutoring has been a large growth area in education over the past 10 years from pre-school age through to university. There have been numerous studies and much debate about the merits of tutoring and extra-curricular intensive study programs, and from what I have understood, the experts believe there is not much value in this approach, apart from those students who require some level of identified remedial tuition.

The reality is most parents have a limited understanding of our education system, different learning approaches and curriculum, and as such believe they're doing the right thing, or providing advantage for their child's education by engaging a tutor. We often hear, “let's get them off to a flying start”, appealing to our competitive natures and insecurities.

Just as children grow in height at different rates, children's mental and motor abilities are the same. We need to get away from the temptation of expecting our children to be performing monkeys rather enjoying the journey of discovery and learning. Slow to read does not mean the child will be a poor reader into the future, nor does being slow at quick maths mean that your child will be hopeless at mathematics.

Food for thought: *the answer lies in engaging with your child and school, and understanding their progress. It is very true that sometimes your child will not relate well to their teacher, or that they will struggle with an area of endeavour, but being able to discuss openly and reasonably with the teachers at your school will provide the best outcomes for your child.*

Children (and adults) need to try without being fearful of failure, as failure often provides the most valuable lessons. Schools should consider reducing the high emphases placed on high performing academic students, and recognise each student for their interests, talents and diversity of endeavours, regardless of the academic score.

In a class it's all too easy for students to feel bad about themselves, if another student is boasting about his or her recent test result. Tunnel vision on test results may miss the bigger and more important picture.

Unfortunately, the system is imperfect and academic scores are too readily used in many ways.

The many educators I have reviewed, and others I have spoken with, are opposed to extra-curricular tutoring in the pre-school and primary years. Pre-school is a time when it is important for children to experience unstructured play, problem solve, make discoveries, and begin socialisation under their own steam. It is also the time that is important for language development and comprehension, with teachers encouraging parents to read to their children daily, and expose their children to and engage with them in many different activities such as dance, drama, ball play, painting, puzzles and family games to name a few.

Secondary school, especially the senior years, is when most families may turn to a tutor. It may be to provide an additional subject not on offer at the school, provide additional learning support, or to enhance academic performance.

If you do believe that your child will benefit from a tutor it is vitally important that you discuss your concerns with your child's teacher and take a co-operative and focused approach. This should be well received, ensuring that you receive the maximum benefit from both the school's learning program and tutor, without confusing your child.

Be mindful, additional study and time spent on academic pursuits will impact on time available for other activities. The saying 'all work and no play' is a reminder that leisure time is equally important for wellbeing and great results, and undue stress and pressure will lead to poor outcomes. Building self-reliance and good study processes over the secondary years will enhance a student's ability to cope in higher education, where the learning program is less structured and students are required to take responsibility for their own learning.

Food for thought: *something that has always stuck in mind from a conversation with our own school's Head, she felt it was far more important for a student to understand how to find an answer rather than knowing a collection of facts – learning how to learn.*

Quote: *"Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon."* – E.M. Forster. (Novelist)

20. Transport – Bus/Train

This is often a hidden cost but can amount to a substantial sum over the year with claims for subsidies and rebates administered by State Governments.

If your school is some distance, then you will be reliant on some form of transport for your child. In the primary years, parents will usually do the school run utilising their own car. What many families may not know is that, depending on the distance from school, you may be able to claim a rebate to cover part of this expense whether your child uses the bus, your car or train.

Schools may have their own bus routes and runs, which is the school's own bus or an external provider. Usually the school will have information for parents regarding the criteria and the necessary paperwork for families to make claims, which are lodged by the school on your behalf in first term of the school year.

Public transport provides concession to all students travelling on their networks.

Further information on how to claim for transport concessions and rebates will be available from your school. The Department of Transport in each state will have further information about all the rebates that are available.

21. School Camps/Excursions

School camps and excursions are an increasing feature in a school's curriculum and your child's education. School camps and excursions extend students' learning; offer your child experiences relating to leadership, team building and self-reliance; and are considered to be vital to the curriculum.

Most schools will provide information in their enrolment pack or across information nights (in the year prior to commencement), and will highlight these types of events, timelines and costs involved. This gives families at least some warning of the additional costs and when they will fall due, so that you can plan ahead. For those having trouble meeting these costs, there is assistance available, and you should contact your school's Welfare Officer or Year Level Co-ordinator. Some Parents' and Friends' associations will raise funds to assist with these costs, normally such funds would be provided to the appropriate school staff for distribution.

Day excursions can be unexpected, and can cause stress if there is an additional expense. Families that run tight budgets can be caught out, and if this is the case, contact your school to discuss options. It is better for child to attend than not attend.

22. School Fees

Public school fees: are these voluntary or compulsory? This is the ongoing debate, albeit a little late. Regardless of your view, the reality is that running a school incurs costs, and these costs include student resources and consumables. Following this line of thought, why shouldn't parents contribute to providing resources for their own child and their education? The more families that contribute towards the school's costs; the better the school is resourced, and the greater the benefit to your own child's education. Whilst some have the view that public education should be free and choose not to contribute, that in turn leaves other families inadvertently subsidising them – is that fair? Schools cannot operate without adequate funding.

Public schools will have a school fee and subject fees, and costs will vary due to subject selection. Public schools will follow up regarding fee payment, and an expectation that it will

be paid. For families experiencing financial hardship there is support – contact your school's welfare officer.

Further information can be obtained by going to your state's Department of Education website. There are clear FAQs that will assist in understanding the fee structure and your commitment.

Catholic/independent school fees are usually set out clearly on the school's website and information provided for families. Arrangement for the payment of these fees will vary between schools, but all have flexible payment options that accommodate the ups and downs of everyday life.

Be mindful that your enrolment is under a contractual agreement, so if you do find that you are no longer in a financial position to continue the enrolment, you do need to advise the school accordingly. Normally these schools require notice of termination, usually the minimum being one school term. Fees in arrears will often incur a penalty that will be added to the amount owed – these vary and can be substantial, and schools will pursue payment.

23. Scholarships

Scholarships provide great savings and opportunities for families and students.

Scholarships are offered by many schools to attract enrolments of students that show excellence in fields such as academic, music, sports, dance, and the performing arts etc. Why do schools offer scholarships in the first place? Simply, it offers schools promising students, provides financial incentives for the student to remain enrolled and therefore stability in enrolments, contributes to improved school outcomes in subject areas, and builds reputation for the school for outstanding student outcomes and high achievers. This in turn is used to attract further enrolments.

Information about a school's scholarship programme can be found on their website, and will require the student to submit an application, sit an exam/audition, and pay an application fee. Many schools outsource the academic exam process and will not make available the results to the participating student.

Parents need to be aware that the scholarship process and outcome may cause distress for their child if expectations are not met, and the scholarship wasn't achieved. Schools will opt for candidates that are in the school's best interest, and not necessarily the student that performed the best in the examination or audition process.

Trap for the unwary: *scholarships usually extend to the final year of the school intake, and should you terminate the enrolment prior, you may be expected to repay the difference between what the normal fee would have been and what you have already paid for each of the years your child received the scholarship. This can be substantial, and acts as a financial deterrent for families leaving the school.*

Scholarship students may also be required to participate in extra-curricular activities and promotional events at the school's discretion. This can lead to very large workloads for the student, classes missed, and additional pressure. Whilst the advantage of reduced fees is welcomed by all families, it often does come with strings, and needs to be taken in context with your child's interests and wellbeing.

- Here is one student's scholarship experience:
<http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/private-school-scholarships-not-always-a-winwin-20160226-gn4pxi.html>

24. After School Care

This is a topic that for many families that causes continuing issues and difficulties. Often before and after school care offered by the school operates on timeframes that do not necessarily come close to resembling the required drop-off and pick-up times for busy families and their work life. School holidays present another issue whereby the holiday program has different pick-up and drop-off times to the usual program. So before and after school child care becomes the major juggling act, and leaves most working parents with little flexibility and loads of uncertainty.

Currently there is no law that states at what age children can or cannot be left alone, but the law is clear about the responsibility of parents to look after their children.

Many primary schools offer an in-school service; students in secondary school are considered at an age where they are responsible enough to look after themselves. Schools that offer boarding should be able to assist for very early morning, late evening or short term stays for secondary aged students.

Often parents working long hours will opt to their own parents when the existing arrangements fall short. This usually is taken as a last resort, as increasingly women are now starting families later, and their own parents are older and naturally less inclined to take on regular babysitting. When all fails, it falls to the network of family, friends or nannies. Friends work well if it is only now and then, but for more permanent arrangements, a nanny is the only option.

In the past I have used the school network to find families that were happy to provide babysitting and overnight stay support when my child was younger, and I would definitely recommend asking at your school if they are aware of a family that might be interested, or if you can advertise in their school's newsletter. Also ask around your network, and if you come up empty-handed after exhausting all these options, contact an agency in your local area. Always do a thorough check of references, and ensure that the person you are engaging has a current 'working with children' certification.

Rebates for child care have been the focus for the successive federal governments, and the constant changes creates difficulties for existing arrangements and further complicates what

is financially manageable and worthwhile. To understand the current rebate system, your full entitlement, and how to claim go to:

- Australian Government Department of Human Services
<https://www.humanservices.gov.au>.

One day it will be recognised and reflected by all governments – good child care and family services lead to improved productivity and a happier, more successful community!

25. Student Welfare Officers

Schools' welfare officers are there to support your family and student at your school, and cover issues relating to social services, financial hardship and support, student wellbeing, and community support. They will always make time for you, listen, provide advice and options, and be your sounding board. They will not think poorly of you or your child and will genuinely seek to find the best outcomes for your circumstance.

It is vital to acknowledge that life presents us with many challenges and from time to time we will need support of some nature. Sadly many families do not receive the support and assistance they need because they are embarrassed, or feel that they are imposing.

If there is not a specialised welfare officer at your school, the role will usually defer to the principal or deputy principal.

26. State Peak Parent Associations

Peak Parent Associations represent the interests of parents with children at schools. This normally takes the form of representations to State and Federal Governments or providing advocacy, information and advice to individual school P&Fs/P&Cs or individual parents.

Just as schools are divided into Government and non-Government so are state peak parent associations. These are all welcoming.

Vic

- Parents Victoria: <http://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au>
- Victorian Parents Council: <http://www.vicparentscouncil.vic.edu.au>
- Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body: <https://vcspb.vic.catholic.edu.au>

NSW

- Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW: <http://pandc.org.au>

- NSW Parents' Council: <http://parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au>
- Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT: <http://www.ccsp.catholic.edu.au>

Qld

- The Federation of Parents & Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Qld: <http://www.pandf.org.au>
- The Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network: <http://www.parentsnetwork.qld.edu.au>
- P&Cs Qld: <http://www.pandcsqld.com.au>

WA

- Parents and Friends Federation of WA: <http://www.pff.wa.edu.au>

SA

- South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs: <http://www.saaspc.org.au>
- The Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities: <http://www.parentfederation.catholic.edu.au>

ACT

- Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools: <http://apfacts.org.au>
- Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT: <http://www.ccsp.catholic.edu.au>
- ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations: <http://www.actparents.org.au>

TAS

- Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council: <http://tcspc.org.au>
- Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends:

27. Education Focused Charities

There are many education focused charities that provide disadvantaged families/students practical assistance with life and educational needs.

- Ardoch Youth Foundation: <https://www.ardoch.org.au/>

- The Smith Family: <https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/>
- A Start in Life: <http://www.astartinlife.org.au/>
- Australian Indigenous Education Foundation: <http://www.aief.com.au/>
- Country Education Foundation of Australia: <https://cef.org.au/>
- Beacon Foundation: <https://beaconfoundation.com.au/>
- Les Twentyman Foundation: <http://www.ltfoundation.com.au/>
- The Salvation Army: <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/>
- St Vincent de Paul Society: <https://www.vinnies.org.au/>
- Brotherhood of St Laurence: <https://www.bsl.org.au/>

28. Government Assistance

Australian Government

- Youth Allowance:
Provides financial assistance for young people who are studying full time, doing a full time Australian Apprenticeship or training. Eligibility criteria apply.
<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/youth-allowance>
- Education Entry Payment:
Provides help with the cost of study if you get certain income support payments. Eligibility criteria apply.
<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/education-entry-payment>
- Family Tax Benefit Part A:
Provides assistance to families with dependent children who are studying up to the age of 19. Eligibility criteria apply.
<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/family-tax-benefit>

NSW Government

- Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme:
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/rde/scholarships/aic/index.php>
- Secondary Schools Living Away from Home Allowance:
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/rde/scholarships/lafha/index.php>

- Boarding Scholarships for Isolated Students scheme:
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/rde/scholarships/bsis/index.php>

Vic Government

- State Schools' Relief:
Provides uniforms, shoes, textbooks etc. Parents wishing to apply must do so through their school. Eligibility criteria apply.
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/families.aspx#link21>
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund:
Payments go to the school and are tied to the student. Eligibility criteria apply.
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx>

Qld Government

- Textbook and Resource Allowance:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/grants/parents-students/textbook-resource-allowance.html>
- School transport assistance schemes:
<http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/pages/transport.html>
- Student concessions for public transport:
<http://translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/concessions>
- Scholarships: <http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/financial/scholarships/>
- Rural and remote support:
<http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/financial/ruralremote/>

SA Government

- School Card scheme:
<http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-skills-and-learning/financial-help-scholarships-and-grants/school-card-scheme/how-to-apply-for-school-card>
- Travel concession and allowances:
<http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-skills-and-learning/financial-help-scholarships-and-grants/travel-concession-and-allowances>
- Grants and services for young people:
<http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-skills-and-learning/financial-help-scholarships-and-grants/government-grants-and-services-for-young-people>

WA Government

- Secondary Assistance Scheme:
<http://www.concessions.wa.gov.au/concessions/Pages/Secondary-Assistance-Scheme.aspx>
- Student Subsidised Travel Scheme:
<http://www.concessions.wa.gov.au/concessions/Pages/Student-Subsidised-Travel-Scheme.aspx>
- Boarding Away from Home Allowance:
<http://www.concessions.wa.gov.au/concessions/Pages/Boarding-Away-from-Home-Allowance.aspx>
- Secondary Assistance Scheme – ABSTUDY Supplement:
<http://www.concessions.wa.gov.au/concessions/Pages/Secondary-Assistance-Scheme---ABSTUDY-Supplement.aspx>

Tas Government

- Student Assistance Scheme:
[https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Student-Assistance-Scheme-\(STAS\)-Guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Student-Assistance-Scheme-(STAS)-Guidelines.pdf)

NT Government

- Financial assistance and scholarships:
<https://nt.gov.au/learning/student-financial-help-and-scholarships>

29. Education Savings Accounts

Many organisations provide dedicated saving/investment accounts focused on your children's future education costs. They vary widely in type, what they do and who they best suit. Listed below is an assortment –there are many others. Some may require tax advice.

- Australian Scholarships Group (Education Fund)
- Mortgage Offset Account (redraw on mortgage to pay school fees)
- CBA Education Savings Plan
- Lifeplan Education Investment Fund
- Online Savings Accounts
- RAMS High Interest Online Savings Account
- ANZ School Ready
- Investment Bonds via Insurers and Friendly Societies