**Information regarding families holding a Temporary Visa (Refugee Status)/Bridging Visa or in Community Detention**

A **Temporary Protection Visa** (refugee status) may be granted to individuals and families who have arrived in Australia without a valid visa. These families are given a Temporary Protection Visa while their refugee status is being determined. These families are eligible to receive a Centrelink benefit (Special Benefit) and therefore are eligible to receive the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

A **Bridging Visa** may be granted to individuals and families who have arrived in Australia and are awaiting a decision on their claim for Refugee status. These people may have arrived with or without a valid visa, and as such may either be waiting on a decision on either temporary or permanent protection visa. These families are unable to access a Centrelink benefit but in some instances may be eligible for a limited living allowance, administered through Red Cross or AMES.  These families can apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) under the ‘Special Consideration’ category provided they can provide written evidence of their situation.  A letter of support is needed from an appropriate welfare agency (e.g. the Australian Red Cross).

**Community Detention**. Individuals or families in Community Detention do not have a Visa of any type, instead they are living in approved accommodation in the community whist they await an outcome of their refugee claim, and are still legally detained. Whereas those on Bridging Visas may receive support through the Community Assistance Support or Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme, those in community detention are clients of the community detention program and have different rights and restrictions. These families can apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) under the ‘Special Consideration’ category provided they can provide written evidence of their situation.  A letter of support is needed from an appropriate welfare agency (e.g. the Australian Red Cross).

**Processing EMA applications from parents/guardians who hold a Temporary Protection(Refugee Status)/Bridging Visa or are in Community Detention**

Schools should enter the applicant’s details into the EMA web system and choose ‘Special Consideration’ from the drop down list in the ‘application type’. A CRN does not need to be entered for those who do not have a valid Centrelink concession card. The details of the special consideration should be entered in the note section and the supporting documentation from the welfare agency can be scanned and attached to the electronic application. Alternatively, the school can fax the supporting documentation to (**03) 9637 2224** or email:ema@edumail.vic.gov.au