

Student Wellbeing Boost – Guidance for Victorian government schools

The Australian Government's Student Wellbeing Boost (Boost) provides one-off funding to schools to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of Australian students. Schools must spend their Boost funding on mental health and wellbeing activities, which may include:

- extra school mental health professionals, such as psychologists and school counsellors;
- camps, excursions, sporting and social activities that improve students' wellbeing; and
- proven student wellbeing, student engagement and mental health initiatives.

Supplementing existing Mental Health and Wellbeing initiatives

The Victorian Department of Education recommends that schools use their Boost funding to complement existing activity, using the [Schools Mental Health Menu](#) as a key guide. The Menu includes initiatives that promote student mental health and wellbeing, enable schools to intervene early to support students and provide targeted and more individualised support for students who need it.

Victorian schools may also wish to use their Boost funding to expand the FTE allocation for staff funded under the [Mental Health in Primary Schools](#), [Mental Health Practitioners](#) and [National Student Wellbeing](#) programs.

Student engagement activities

Schools wishing to use their Boost funding on proven student engagement activities are encouraged to draw on existing tools and guidance to identify the students who need support with attendance/engagement issues. This could be done through the [Panorama](#) Absence [Dashboard](#), [Staying in Education Dashboard](#) (secondary school only) and the Student View Dashboard and processes outlined in the [Schools Guide to Attendance](#).

Camps and physical activity (including sports and outdoor activities)

Camps

Schools wishing to use their Boost funding on camps are encouraged reach out to the relevant peak body or utilise existing online booking enquiry services.

Schools can access an [online booking enquiry service](#) on the Australia Camps Association (ACA) website as well as search for [camps](#) or [activities](#). As ACA is a national organisation, schools will need to filter for Victorian camps and activities.

Physical activity

Schools wishing to use their Boost funding for physical activity, including sports and outdoor activities, are recommended to refer to the [Active Schools Initiative](#) and [Active Schools Toolkit](#) which supports schools to take a whole school approach to physical activity.

Procurement

Government schools must follow existing department [procurement procedures](#) and [templates](#) when engaging staff or services using Boost funding.

Funding Arrangements

Victorian government and low-fee non-government schools will receive base Boost funding of \$15,000 plus additional per student funding. High-fee non-government schools will receive funding of \$7,500 with no additional per student funding.

Schools are required to spend, or commit to spend, the money by 31 March 2024.

Victorian government schools will receive their funding allocation through an out-of-cycle offline Student Resource Package (SRP) payment before Friday 30 June 2023. The payments will appear in school SRP cash reports under '*Student Wellbeing Boost*'.

Further Information

For further information about the Boost, please refer to the below [FAQs](#) or schools can contact the Department of Education by email at studentwellbeingboost@education.vic.gov.au.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Question	Response
Why have schools received this funding?	In response to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on student mental health and wellbeing, the Australian Government has provided each State and Territory with one-off Student Wellbeing Boost funding to support students through a range of mental health and wellbeing activities.
What can schools spend the funding on?	<p>Schools must spend their Boost funding on mental health and wellbeing activities, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extra school mental health professionals, such as psychologists and school counsellors; • camps, excursions, sporting and social activities that improve students' wellbeing; and • proven student wellbeing, student engagement and mental health initiatives <p>The Victorian Department of Education recommends that schools use their Boost funding to complement existing activity, using the Schools Mental Health Menu as a key guide. The Menu includes initiatives that promote student mental health and wellbeing, enable schools to intervene early to support students and provide targeted and more individualised support for students who need it.</p> <p>Victorian schools may also wish to use their Boost funding to expand the FTE allocation for staff funded under the Mental Health in Primary Schools, Mental Health Practitioners and National Student Wellbeing programs.</p>
Can schools use this funding for any purpose?	No. Schools can only use their Boost funding to support student mental health and wellbeing.
How were funding allocations decided?	<p>All Victorian government and low-fee non-government schools will receive base Boost funding of \$15,000 plus additional per student funding. The base plus enrolment approach is consistent with the approach applied to the Schools Mental Health Fund, Mental Health Practitioners and Mental Health in Primary School program.</p> <p>Enrolment figures were drawn from the August 2022 census.</p>
When will my school receive the funding?	Boost funding will be distributed to every Victorian school by 30 June 2023.

Question	Response
How will schools receive the money?	Victorian government schools will receive their funding allocation through an out-of-cycle offline Student Resource Package (SRP) payment before Friday 30 June 2023. The payments will appear in school SRP cash reports under ‘ <i>Student Wellbeing Boost</i> ’.
When does the funding need to be spent by?	All schools must spend, or commit to spend, the funding by 31 March 2024.
What happens if schools don't spend the funding by 31 March 2024?	<p>The funding will not be recalled if it is not spent by the deadline and schools do not need to submit a specific report on how the funding was spent. However, schools should comply with the Department of Education’s procurement procedures when making purchases, including keeping appropriate records.</p> <p>If schools are having difficulty spending their funding, please consult the above guidance. Government schools can also contact studentwellbeingboost@education.vic.gov.au for assistance.</p>
Will schools receive more Boost funding next year?	No. This is one-off funding for every Australian school in 2023 to address COVID-19 impacts on student mental health and wellbeing.
What are the acquittal requirements for this funding?	<p>Schools are required to spend, or commit to spend, the money by 31 March 2024. Schools do not need to submit a specific report on how the funding was spent.</p> <p>However, schools should comply with the Department of Education’s procurement procedures when making purchases, including keeping appropriate records.</p>
Can schools use this funding to purchase items from the Schools Mental Health Menu?	Yes. Schools can use the Boost funding to supplement existing funding to purchase items available on the Schools Mental Health Menu .
How is this funding different from the Schools Mental Health Fund?	<p>The Schools Mental Health Fund is a Victorian Government commitment with ongoing funding where schools will receive an annual allocation.</p> <p>The Student Wellbeing Boost is an Australian Government commitment that provides one-off funding to schools in response to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on student mental health and wellbeing.</p>

Question	Response
<p>My school receives funding for physical activity through Active Schools. Can I use this Boost funding for physical activity?</p>	<p>Yes. Schools who wish to use their Student Wellbeing Boost funding on physical activity and who are in receipt of an Active Schools Grant, PE and Sports Funding Boost and/or an Extracurricular Boost are encouraged to complement existing activities or plans.</p> <p>If your school is working with a Physical Activity Advisor from the Active Schools Expert Support Service, your school is encouraged to discuss this funding with your Physical Activity Advisor.</p>
<p>How is this funding different from the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund?</p>	<p>The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) provides payments for <u>eligible</u> students to attend activities like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school camps or trips • swimming and school-organised sport programs • outdoor education programs • excursions and incursions. <p>The Student Wellbeing Boost is an Australian Government commitment that provides one-off funding to schools in response to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on student mental health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>How can my school be involved in a case study?</p>	<p>The Australian Government has asked each State and Territory to provide case studies on how schools used their Boost funding to support their wellbeing of their school community.</p> <p>If your school would like to be involved in a case study, please contact studentwellbeingboost@education.vic.gov.au.</p>