



PEF PRIMARY SCHOLARSHIP

Assists NSW public primary school students experiencing financial hardship with educational expenses to help them engage, learn, and excel in their primary years



Overview of Scholarship

The Public Education Foundation is a charity that provides life-changing scholarships to young people in public education, and to their teachers and principals. We work with schools, communities, unions, the private sector and government to help students achieve their full potential at a public school. Our scholarship program began more than fifteen years ago and now runs more than sixty different scholarships across primary, secondary and tertiary study.

Most of those scholarships exist because a donor, a union or a company chose to fund something specific. This one is different. The Public Education Foundation Primary Scholarship is offered by the Foundation itself, paid for from untied donations and funds: money given to us without any direction attached, by people who trusted us to put it where it would do the most good.

That trust is what makes this scholarship possible. It lets us support a child whose circumstances don't happen to match anyone's criteria, but whose family is under real pressure all the same. Four scholarships are awarded each year to students at NSW public primary schools, for the ordinary costs of schooling that become hard to meet: uniforms and shoes, books and stationery, a device, excursions, camps, sport and music.

Is this scholarship for your child? This scholarship is for students enrolled at a NSW government primary school, from Kindergarten to Year 6, whose family is experiencing financial hardship. Your application will need the endorsement of your school principal.

If that isn't you, it doesn't mean there's nothing here. The Public Education Foundation offers scholarships across primary, secondary and tertiary study, and our [Eligibility Quiz](#) can help you find a scholarship that does. It takes a few minutes, and it is the best place to start.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, the nominee must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- be enrolled in Kindergarten to Year 6 at a NSW government primary school, School for Specific Purposes, Environmental Education Centre, Central school or Hospital school in 2027
- be experiencing financial hardship, or be part of a family experiencing financial hardship, that affects their ability to take part fully in school
- provide their latest school report and a community reference
- have the endorsement of their school principal
- remain enrolled at a NSW government school for the duration of the scholarship
- not hold another Public Education Foundation scholarship. A student can only hold one PEF scholarship at a time

The application form will also ask for:

- a personal statement from or on behalf of the nominee, addressing the eligibility criteria and explaining what the scholarship would make possible
- a statement of endorsement from the school principal
- contact details for the applicant, the nominee and the school

The applicant is whoever completes the form. That may be the nominee, a parent or carer, or a member of school staff acting on the nominee's behalf. For a primary-aged student it is usually a parent, carer or teacher.



Selection Process

Applications are checked for eligibility, then read by a selection panel of reviewers. Reviewers are looking for a clear picture of the family's circumstances and a clear sense of what would change for the child. There is no test, no marks and no academic threshold. A short, honest statement about what school currently costs your family and what you would use the money for will do more than a polished one.

How applications are assessed

- The Public Education Foundation first checks each application for eligibility and completeness
- A selection panel of independent experts assesses all eligible applications against the criteria above
- The panel weighs the parent/carer statements, the school report, the community reference and the principal's statement together – no single document decides an application
- The panel's recommendations are put to the PEF's Board for approval
- The decision of the selection panel is final, and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the outcome of individual applications



Funding/Assistance

- The scholarship is \$1,000, paid over one year, for the 2027 school year. It is a single-year scholarship and is not renewable, though a scholar may apply again the following year
- Four scholarships are awarded each year
- Scholars also receive access to Studiosity, an online study support service available to every Public Education Foundation scholar. There is no additional cost, and access is arranged after the scholarship is accepted
- The first payment is made only after confirmed evidence of the student's enrolment has been provided
- The scholarship cannot be transferred to another student or family member

Acceptable Use of Scholarship Funds

Funds may be used to support the student's educational needs, such as:

- uniforms and school shoes (including sports uniforms)
- literacy and numeracy support programs
- stationery and classroom learning materials
- a laptop, iPad or similar device
- subject-related or study software
- a home printer and/or internet access
- educational excursions, camps, or sports programs
- furniture for home study (desk, chair, lamp)
- face-to-face or online tutoring
- transport costs directly related to schooling

The scholarship is not intended for:

- general household or family expenses not connected to the student's education
- school fees or contributions that the family is not required to pay
- items for another child in the family

Record keeping

- Families should keep receipts for items bought with scholarship funds
- Unspent funds at the end of the scholarship period must be returned to the Public Education Foundation
- Before applying, please read the full scholarship [terms and conditions](#)

If you are unsure whether something is covered, contact us before you spend. We would much rather answer the question than have a family worry about it.

Application Form

The online application form asks for the following. It can be saved and returned to at any time before the closing date. You will be asked for:

- details of the of the nominee
- the nominee's school, year level and enrolment details
- a description of the family's financial circumstances
- a personal statement addressing the eligibility criteria
- principal endorsement

One thing worth knowing about PEF-Apply: when you complete an application, your answers carry across to any other scholarship you open. If you apply for more than one, you are not starting from scratch each time. If you don't open the others, your answers stay with this scholarship only.

Notes for references

- Community references must be specific and supportive. Generic references may disadvantage applicants
- Principal statements must provide individualised commentary; generic responses may disadvantage applicants
- Give your referees as much notice as you can

Writing the statements

- Write in your own words about your own child – the panel is not looking for polished writing, it is looking for a clear picture of the student
- Address each selection criterion in turn, with a short example for each
- Be specific about what the money would be spent on and what difference it would make
- Scanned or photographed documents are accepted provided they are clearly legible



How to Apply

- Applications must be submitted online via [PEF-Apply](#), the Public Education Foundation's application portal. Create an account to access the form
- Complete every section of the application form
- Upload the student's latest school report and the community reference
- Provide the principal's email address so the system can issue the request for the Principal's Supporting Statement. Do this early – the principal needs time to respond, and your application cannot be submitted without it
- Check that your own contact details are correct, as all correspondence about the application is sent by email

If anything in this kit is unclear, or you would like help completing the application, please get in touch. We are glad to talk it through, and no question is too small.



Submitting Your Application

- Applications open: August 2026
- Applications close: October 2026

You can save your application in progress and return to it at any time before the closing date. Once you click Submit, your application is sent to the Public Education Foundation and will be reviewed during the Panel assessment period. **Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in December.**

Important information

- Late applications cannot be accepted, and the portal closes automatically at the advertised time
- All sections of the application, including the Principal's Supporting Statement, must be completed before the application can be submitted
- Submit as early as you can – the portal is busiest in the final days before closing
- You will receive an automatic email confirming your submission. If it does not arrive, check your junk folder and then contact the Public Education Foundation
- Applications cannot be edited after submission



Further Information and Contact Details

For further information, please contact the Public Education Foundation Scholarships team:

- Email: scholarships@publiceducationfoundation.org.au
- Phone: 02 7814 2806