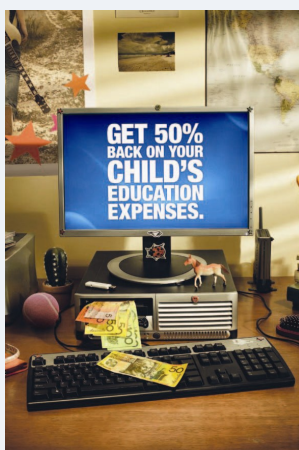


It's tax time again and for South Australia's public school parents, the Education Tax Refund (ETR) is an opportunity to increase the size of that refund.

The ETR began last year and entitles eligible parents to claim up to 50% of their children's education costs as tax deductions.

Eligible expenses include:

- laptops & home computers
- USB flash drives
- home Internet connections
- computer software
- computer repairs
- school textbooks
- tools of trade.



Make Your Claim

Earlier this year, the ATO released figures showing only half of eligible parents had lodged a claim for the ETR.

For those who have lodged their claims, many are not taking full advantage of the refund, with the average claim being:

- \$246.99 for primary students &
- \$495.73 for secondary students.

Refund Increase

The amounts you can claim have increased since last year. For the 2009/2010 income year you can now claim up to:

- \$780 for each primary school student - a refund of up to \$390.
- \$1558 for each secondary student - a refund of up to \$779.

Claim School Uniforms

Just announced, next year parents will be able to add the cost of their children's school uniforms to the ETR Claim.

When the ETR was announced, school uniforms were on the list of items that had been excluded as eligible claims - along with sporting equipment, musical instruments and schools fees*.

However, parents will also be able to claim up to 50% of the cost of school uniforms purchased after July 2011.

Materials & Services Charge

School fees are not deemed an eligible expense for the Education Tax Refund.

Initial indications were that the Materials & Services Charge would be considered a *school fee* and therefore you would not be able to claim it.

However, in 2009 SAASSO applied to the Australian Tax Office for a ruling on this issue - believing that the M&S charge is actually an 'at-cost recovery' and not a fee.

In response to SAASSO's request, the ATO determined that:

"The South Australian materials and services charge contains both eligible and non-eligible education expenses. Therefore, where the school has provided a breakdown of this charge, the eligible portions will qualify for inclusion in a parent's Education Tax Refund calculations."

The ATO further advised that:

"Where possible the statement for the fee should identify the value of the eligible expenses. However, the school can advise of the breakdown in another written notice, either at the time the fee is invoiced or at a later date. Schools should keep a written record of how the apportionment was to assist with any queries."

[Click here for more information](#)

This information is supplied as general advice only. Individuals should seek their own advice from the ATO or tax specialist before claiming expenses.