Australian Government

Services Australia



Getting help from ABSTUDY when living away from home

Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students living away from home.

How ABSTUDY can help

High school students living away from home can get help from ABSTUDY to pay for:

- boarding fees
- school fees
- travel to school and back home again for school holidays
- extra baggage when traveling to school or back home
- an adult supervisor to travel with students under 18
- other trips for them and their parent or guardian if needed
- a place to stay and food if the trip gets disrupted.

When you're child is living away from home to go to high school, it can be easy for them to feel home sick when they're far away from family. ABSTUDY can help with the costs of travel to keep them connected to family, community and culture.

Schools work with ABSTUDY to book travel for students boarding with them. If your child boards privately, parents or guardians need to call the ABSTUDY line to book their travel.

ABSTUDY also helps students with the costs of boarding and school fees. There are lots of different situations where students can get help from ABSTUDY.

Student living away from home for high school

Solomon always knew he'd have to move away for high school. He loved his local community school but it finished at year 6. His cousins had gone to a school in Bunbury and had lived in a hostel there. There was an open day coming up and Solomon wanted to visit.

First, Solomon's parents called ABSTUDY to see what help Solomon could get. ABSTUDY paid for the trip for Solomon and one of his parents to go to the open day. ABSTUDY also paid for their hotel room and meals.

When Solomon and his parents decided that was the school for him, he enrolled. ABSTUDY paid Solomon's school fees to the school and paid Solomon's boarding fees direct to the hostel.

Student living with another family for high school

At the end of year 10, Panai had a choice to make. Stay at his local school for years 11 and 12, or move away to study at a school that offered an auto-electrical course. Panai decided to live with his cousins in Wollongong and study the course he really wanted to do.

As Panai was already 16, he called ABSTUDY to find out what help he could get. ABSTUDY made a payment to Panai's school that paid for most of his school fees and special subject fees each year. ABSTUDY paid a fortnightly payment to Panai's parents to help with Panai's living costs.

Panai's parents called ABSTUDY to book Panai's travel back to his family's home. Panai travelled home for school holidays and to go to his community's annual NAIDOC Week event.

Student has a scholarship

When Veneita was in year 9 she won a scholarship to go to a boarding school in Brisbane. The scholarship paid for most of the boarding and school fees. Veneita felt really lucky to be able to get to go to such a good school, but it was still expensive.

A few months before Veneita started at her new school, Veneita's mum called ABSTUDY to see what extra help she could get. ABSTUDY paid for the rest of the boarding and school fees.

Most of the ABSTUDY payments went straight to Veneita's school, but a bit also went to Veneita's mum each fortnight. Veneita's mum kept getting Family Tax Benefit and that helped as well. ABSTUDY also paid for trips when Veneita or her mum needed to travel.

Student in a school play or another similar activity

Kimma was excited to be chosen to have a lead part in the school play. But she worried that no one from her family would get to see her perform.

Her mother called the school to see about coming to see Kimma's play. The school booked her a trip with ABSTUDY to visit the school. ABSTUDY also paid for meals and a hotel room.

On the big night, Kimma felt great seeing her mother sitting in the audience.

There's a parent teacher interview

Samson liked boarding school but some of his subjects were hard. His dad asked him on the phone how his classes were going and Samson didn't know what to say.

In the middle of the year, the school held parent teacher interviews. Samson was relieved when his dad said he would be coming to meet Samson's teachers. Samson's dad also looked after Samson's two-year-old sister and there was no one else who could look after her.

ABSTUDY paid for the trip for both of them. It also paid for the hotel and food so Samson's dad and sister could stay overnight before traveling home again.

Student has a sporting event

Lavina had only been playing rugby league for two years but she was already obsessed with the game.

Lavina jumped at the chance to represent her school and play against other top school teams at a state carnival. It was in another city and Lavina and her teammates had to fundraise to help pay for the bus and accommodation.

Lavina's dad was excited to watch Lavina play in the carnival. He called the school to see if he could be there to cheer her on. Lavina's school booked flights and a motel room with ABSTUDY for her dad to come and watch her play.

Student needs to go to a community event

Lowanna was excited about turning 16. She could get her L plates, her auntie promised her a new phone and she would have a coming of age ceremony. Lowanna's auntie told her when the ceremony would be. The date was in the middle of term and Lowanna was worried about how she would go without missing too much school. She told her boarding supervisor who spoke to Lowanna's auntie. Lowanna's auntie sent the school a letter about the ceremony from a community Elder.

The school then booked travel with ABSTUDY. Lowanna had a short visit home for the ceremony. Lowanna also knew she could travel again if there was more women's business she needed to be part of.

Student is graduating or getting an award

Tyrone had found it hard when he first started living away from home to go to school. Instead of living with his uncle in community, he lived in a homestay in another city.

But after 3 years he had made lots of friends and was about to finish year 12. Because Tyrone had struggled with his schoolwork in early high school, he felt it was a big achievement to make it this far. Tyrone's uncle felt just as proud.

Tyrone's uncle called ABSTUDY about coming to Tyrone's formal and seeing Tyrone graduate. ABSTUDY booked a return flight and a place to stay for Tyrone's uncle so he wouldn't miss out on Tyrone's important occasion.

Student is homesick and thinking of leaving school

David had just started boarding at a school in Brisbane. The first few weeks were exciting and everything was new. But after a while, David found it really hard to be away from his friends and family.

He couldn't concentrate on his studies and he wasn't getting any of his schoolwork done. David felt it was too hard and told his boarding supervisor he wanted to go home to live with his family.

The school called David's parents and explained David was having trouble adjusting. They booked a trip for David's mum to visit the school and spend some time with David. ABSTUDY also paid for meals and a place for her to stay. After that visit, David decided he'd stay at school and try again.

Student is at risk of being expelled

Petrina was in year 10 and hated school. She couldn't see the point of schoolwork and hadn't finished any all term. Petrina was rude to her teachers and picked a fight with another student.

The school called Petrina's guardian and let her know Petrina was at risk of being expelled. The school booked travel for her guardian to come to the school and spend time with Petrina. ABSTUDY paid for meals and a place to stay for Petrina's guardian as well.

The visit was a chance for Petrina, her guardian and her teachers to work out a plan. Petrina agreed she would finish the year and then start a traineeship.

Student is sick or hurt

School was going great for John. John was in his second year of living away from home in Perth, he had lots of friends and his teachers were happy with his work.

One day after school, John was skateboarding on the tennis court. John crashed badly and broke his leg. John's boarding supervisor took him to the hospital to get x-rays and a cast. The doctor said John had a bad break and would need to rest for several weeks.

The school called John's mother. She came to be with John and take him home until he was well. ABSTUDY paid for the trips and a place for his mother to stay when she came to get him.

A family member is critically sick

Nykia knew her grandma was old. But she wasn't expecting to get a call to say her grandma was in hospital. Nykia was upset to think her grandma might pass away without Nykia seeing her again.

She told her favourite teacher her grandma might not get well again. The school called Nykia's auntie. Nykia's auntie sent them a copy of a letter from the doctor. The school then booked a short trip with ABSTUDY for Nykia to go home and see her grandma.

Student has to go to a funeral or Sorry Business

Michael was living with a family friend while he went to high school in another town. Michael heard from his dad that a community Elder had died. The whole community needed to come together, including Michael.

Michael's dad booked a return flight for Michael to the community. Michael stayed in community for the whole time the Sorry Business was going on, and then went back to school. Everyone was glad Michael could be there.

Michael's dad hadn't thought to call ABSTUDY before booking the travel. After Michael's trip, his dad made the call and sent ABSTUDY the details of the flights. ABSTUDY paid Michael's dad back for the costs of the flights.

There's an emergency or disaster

Koby was looking forward to some dry weather to be able to play footy with his friends. In fact, it was raining so heavily the whole school was at risk of being flooded.

The school called Koby's dad to say Koby would be coming home because of the risk of flooding. The school booked a trip with ABSTUDY for Koby's dad to pick him up from school and take him home.

Koby stayed at home until the flooding had gone down and it was safe to return to school. Then, ABSTUDY paid for Koby's dad to take him back to school.

Student has an interview or exam for a course after high school

Mary was 18 years old and she was finally finishing year 12. After being a boarding student for 6 years, Mary was sad about leaving her friends and her favourite teachers. She now had to make a tricky decision – what she would do after high school.

Mary applied for several courses. A TAFE in Melbourne and a university in Sydney both invited Mary to come to an interview. Mary called the ABSTUDY line and arranged travel so she could go to both interviews. ABSTUDY also booked hotels in both cities and gave Mary an allowance for meals.

ABSTUDY reminder

Does your child have their own Tax File Number (TFN)?

It's free to get a TFN. Your child's school can help them apply for a TFN. Make sure you tell your child's school they have a TFN so they can pass it onto ABSTUDY.

You can find the form on the Australian Taxation Office website. Go to **ato.gov.au/tfn**

You can also call the ABSTUDY line on **1800 132 317.**

Note: Calls to '1800' numbers from your home phone are free. Calls from public and mobile phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.

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For more information

Go to **servicesaustralia.gov.au/abstudy**

Call the ABSTUDY line on **1800 132 317.**