Policy Statement on families holding a Temporary Visa or a Bridging Visa (Refugee Status)

A Temporary Protection Visa is a visa for people who have entered Australia illegally. These families are given a Temporary Protection Visa while their refugee status is being determined. Students of families on a Temporary Protection Visa are enrolled in schools, fee exempt. 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 (Refugee Status) is provided to families when their original visa is about to expire. Students of families on a Bridging Visa (Refugee Status) are enrolled in schools, fee exempt. These families are unable to access a Centrelink Benefit. However, these families can apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) under the ‘Special Consideration’ category provided they show evidence of their plight. A letter of support is needed from an appropriate welfare agency (i.e. the Australian Red Cross) to verify their situation.

Processing applications from parents/guardians who are holding a Bridging Visa (Refugee Status)

Schools would need to key in the applicant’s details into the EMA Web System as normal except that the status bar in the Application screen is changed to **P1 Special Consideration** (or **P2 Special Consideration** for the second instalment). The ‘Save’ button should then be activated and a dialog box should appear. This dialog box is for internal use only, to key in the reason for the Special Consideration.

To alert Head Office that a Special Consideration has been applied for, the school would need to fax through to the Department’s Corporate Services Division on 03 9637 2850 a letter endorsed by the principal, as well as the support letter from the welfare agency, to explain the special circumstances.