

# Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability Procedure

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## 1. Purpose

This procedure sets out a consistent approach to managing the Department of Education's (DoE) Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Student Transport Management Policy](#), and is to ensure services are provided in an equitable, efficient and cost-effective manner across the State.

## 2. Overview

This procedure provides clear advice to students, parents/carers and schools on eligibility criteria and rights and responsibilities. Parents/carers and schools are encouraged to actively pursue travel training programs for students with disability so that they can achieve independent mobility where possible.

The Transport Assistance Program is intended to assist eligible students to attend a Government school.

## 3. Eligibility

Transport to and from all schools remains a parental responsibility, and the Transport Assistance Program seeks to assist parents, rather than remove their individual responsibility for school transport arrangements.

To be eligible, students will have a severe identifiable disability and generally have a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan; and their families are not able to transport them to/from school. Eligibility is determined by an assessment process outlined in this Procedure, where the student's level of travel independence is assessed.

Students who meet the eligibility criteria may access contracted services to and from school, subject to available seating and dependent on pick up location. It is also subject to appropriate student specific risk / safety management, assessment and recommendations to ensure safety of all during travel.

When applying for transport assistance, parent/carer capacity to convey or arrange conveyance of their children should be fully explored in the first instance. Genuine reasons why this is not possible must be identified on the application for transport assistance (genuine reasons include no access to wheelchair accessible vehicle or any vehicle at all, or parent/carer does not hold a licence. It does not include work commitments of parents/carer).

The provision of transport assistance cannot be approved automatically, and occurs via application.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Corporate and Business Services – Facility Services (Transport Procurement Support)

- Coordinate procurement processes between Disability Services, Learning Services and the Department of State Growth.
- Liaise with the Transport Committee to ensure expertise is provided to the procurement panel.

### 4.2 Manager, Disability Services

- Convene the [Transport Committee](#).
- Revise the Transport Assistance Program procedure in consultation with the Transport Committee.
- Ensure funding for student taxi transport and bus assistants is allocated from central funding.
- Ensure that only approved Year 13 students receive transport assistance to and from a Secondary school site. These students must also first make application for a Year 13 of schooling.
- Ensure that the Transport Committee is guided to review all applications with the view that:
  - Transport is home to school to home at beginning and end of normal school day only.
  - Individual transport is not provided to facilitate reduced hours of attendance or to alternate programs.

- Students being transported to two schools must be formally dual enrolled.
- Transport assistance may be provided for eligible students to a recognised respite centre if that service is available within the existing transport schedule and budget allocations, and if it is a regular, scheduled arrangement. Ad hoc changes to transport arrangements are not possible.
- Taxi transport provision is reviewed annually; not provided for transport to and from respite, school excursions or therapy programs.

### **4.3 Learning Services, Student Support**

- Address and resolve parent issues as per the [Enquiries and Complaints Management Policy](#) and [Making a Complaint factsheet](#).

### **4.4 Principals/Nominated Person Within the School**

- Provide day to day oversight and management of school transport arrangements, including resolution of parent concerns.
- Assess the student's transport requirements and eligibility for transport assistance in accordance with the Procedure for all new students, students receiving taxi provisions, and for students who have changed circumstances or eligibility.
- Maintain contact with families to ensure student's transport requirements are met in accordance with the Transport Assistance Procedure.
- Advise parents/carers of the outcome of the application for assistance.
- Liaise with the Administration Officer regarding applications and the availability and provision of appropriate transport.
- Write letters of support to the Department of State Growth for families requesting [Conveyance Allowance](#) as required.
- School coordinates transport equipment needs with the family and treating therapist (occupational therapist or physiotherapist). Any transport assistance provided is guided by the treating therapist's prescription for the most suitable seating and safety equipment based on their assessment of the student's individual characteristics and postural support requirements. If this changes over time, updated prescription is required.
- School coordinates with the family to ensure students' personal NDIS plan includes any prescribed transport related safety equipment e.g. personalised harnesses, supported seating and appropriate wheelchairs.
- School liaises with the bus operator to ensure any required equipment is safely installed.
- Training in the use of public and private transport may need to be provided in collaboration with the family.

### **4.5 Transport Committee**

- The Transport Committee consists of the Manager, Disability Services; Inclusion and Access Coordinators; Administration Officer; and representatives from the Support Schools.
- The Transport Committee meets annually to assess student eligibility for all new students, students who receive taxi transport provisions, and for students who have changed circumstances/eligibility and on a needs basis for exceptional circumstances.
- The Transport Committee also reviews applications received during the school year.

### **4.6 Inclusion and Access Coordinators**

- Provide high level advice to the Transport Committee, where required.

## 4.7 Administration Officer (Transport Students with Disability)

- Provide administrative support and advice to administer the transport assistance program for students with disability in collaboration with school staff.
- Assist with the flow and management of information through the provision of guidance and instruction on practices, systems and processes.
- Assist with maintaining records and information, developing and distributing quality communications, together with liaison with departmental personnel and schools.
- Liaise with the Department of State Growth and other transport providers as necessary.
- Assist schools in the implementation of the procedure.
- Coordinate the State-wide Transport Committee and processes
- Confirm the school placement of a student prior to the assessment for transport and assistance.
- Ensure that relevant staff are familiar with the assessment of student transport requirements within the procedure.
- Liaise with the relevant DoE staff to provide the most cost-effective transport arrangements for students requiring transport assistance (i.e. bus transport versus taxi support).
- Liaise with the Department of State Growth, regarding any changes to student transport, routes, etc and other stakeholders as required.
- Order student equipment that is not provided under the student's personal NDIS plans and monitor purchases over time.

## 4.8 Parents/Carers

- The responsibility for conveying students with disability to and from school lies with the parent/carers, as is the case for all students attending school.
- Parent/carers need to include any equipment required for travel in NDIS plans prior to travel commencing.
- Parents/carers should understand that where special transport assistance is approved it is generally to a single nominated residence and is conditional upon their:
  - being present at pick up and set down times unless they have made other agreed arrangements;
  - notifying the transport provider or bus attendant, in advance of pick-up, when a student will not require transport;
  - conveying their child between the residence and the transport vehicle at the pick-up and set down times;
  - giving notice to the principal or nominated staff member of variations likely to occur in their child's school attendance pattern e.g. extended illness;
  - cooperating in the review of continuing eligibility for student access;
  - supporting in-transit behaviour requirements and their implementation if necessary; and
  - active pursuit of a travel training program for the student where appropriate, both to and from school.

**Transport Assistance may be withdrawn if these parental/carer responsibilities are not met.**

## 5. Process

### 5.1 Preparing the Application

The process for application involves the following:

1. School staff together with family determine the parents/carers capacity to meet their responsibility in relation to transporting their child to and from school.
2. School staff together with parent/carer confirm attendance at the nearest appropriate school/educational facility.

3. School staff determine, in collaboration with the parents/carers that the student's level of transport independence is one of the three highest levels 4, 5 or 6 ('travel assisted', 'dependent' or 'most dependent') as per Appendix 1.
4. School staff determine, in collaboration with the parent/carers and treating therapists whether supported seating will be required during travel. If so, the family must consult with their NDIS planner regarding this prior to travel commencing; and treating therapist must complete the Therapist Assessment and Recommendations form (Appendix 4).
5. School staff develop and implement a specific travel training program as part of the student's Learning Plan, in collaboration with the parents/carer and schools, as appropriate. This should be stored in the Student Support System (SSS).
6. Complete Application for Transport Assistance form (Appendix 3) and submit to [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au) via email with Therapist Assessment and Recommendations form (Appendix 4) if required.

## 5.2 Assessment of the Application

The Administration Officer for the Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability receives and processes all applications. The Administration Officer works with the school initiating the application, and the Transport Committee to establish eligibility for each application.

During the assessment process, liaison with the Department of State Growth may be necessary, especially if information is needed about local public transport services, conveyance allowance or the availability of particular types of contract transport (e.g. bus, or bus with wheelchair lift). The Administration Officer or Corporate and Business Services staff will follow up with the Department of State Growth in such cases.

The Transport Committee determines if bus or taxi transport is possible and recommended to provide the most cost effective transport solutions for students within the available budget.

The application request is recorded as approved or not approved by the Committee, the AO drafts a letter with outcome advice including review dates as required and sends this to the school. School staff are responsible for sending the letter to the family.

If the student requires equipment to ensure safety during travel; either:

- The family request and subsequently provide, via the student's personal NDIS plan.

OR

- In the event that equipment is required urgently to ensure safe travel to school and NDIS is unable to review the student's plan in the timeframe required, DoE Disability Services will consider purchasing equipment required via request to the Transport Committee as a loan until the student's personal NDIS plan is reviewed and equipment provided.
- If the Administration Officer coordinates purchase of equipment, school staff remain responsible to coordinate the implementation with family/therapist.
- School is required to liaise with the bus operator if the equipment requires anchor points in the vehicle.

If a student has been approved for transport and their circumstances change, an interim review is required where there is a:

- change of home address;
- change of school arrangements;
- change in the student's capacity to travel independently; or
- change in parents/carers capacity to provide or arrange transport.

In these instances, school staff must initiate a new Application form and send to [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au) to review transport provision and update the Department of State Growth and operators as required.

### 5.3 Forms of Assistance

The following types of transport assistance may be provided subject to this procedure and the availability of the appropriate type of transport:

- public bus transport assistance;
- conveyance allowance for use of a private motor vehicle;
- contracted bus transport;
- taxi travel (maxi taxi); or
- a combination of the above.

Contract bus or taxi services will only be considered when parents/carers demonstrate that they are unable to transport their student to and from school and arrangements cannot be made for the student to travel on public transport or other forms of community travel. The service will be subject to regular review and the available budget.

### 5.4 Transport Arrangements

Transport assistance is provided on a strictly 'home to school', 'school to home' basis at the beginning and end of the normal school day.

No variation to the approved transport can take place without the prior, written approval of the Transport Committee, or its nominee, and may only be applied for in the following circumstances:

- Respite: transport assistance may be provided for eligible students to a recognised respite centre if that service is available within the existing transport schedule and budget allocations; and if it is a regular, scheduled arrangement. Ad hoc changes to transport arrangements are not possible.
- Dual enrolment: subject to these guidelines and procedures, transport assistance may be provided in the case of formal dual enrolment, within normal contracted routes if seats are available.

Transport is not available for travel to therapy or excursions.

The purpose of this program is to provide transport assistance for eligible students with disability. Transport for a sibling/s will not be provided.

### 5.5 Travel Training

Independent mobility is a significant factor in assisting students to gain access to the environment and develop a positive self-image. Many education programs for students with disability are underpinned by the need for community access and mobility.

Travel training is a priority curriculum activity for many students and at an appropriate age students who do not currently possess the skills to travel alone but have the potential to develop the skills required, should have this need addressed through the Learning Plan process. Inclusion and Access Coordinators can be contacted for program advice.

Parents/carers are encouraged to be actively involved in travel training from home to school. Parents/carers are also encouraged to consolidate and extend their children's knowledge and skills in community access, mobility and road safety outside school hours.

Travel training should incorporate methods of travel which will be available to the student after he/she leaves school. Such transportation may include:

- Walking
- Wheelchairs (manual or electric)
- Bicycles

- Buses
- Taxis
- Specialised community transport

There is a clear need for close consultation and collaboration between the school and parents/carers, particularly when travel training is initially proposed and when special transport services are phased out as travel training progresses.

Specific strategies for the phased reduction and eventual cessation of special transport services are required. Independent travel should only be undertaken once the student has reliably demonstrated the essential travel and road safety skills and protective behaviours.

## 5.6 Process for concerns, complaints and grievance procedure

- School concerns should be addressed with transport providers in the first instance. Transport providers may request advice from the Department of State Growth (if required).
- Parent concerns that the school can't resolve locally (i.e. directly with the transport operator) to be directed to regional Learning Services office as per the [Making a Complaint factsheet](#). The Department of State Growth may be able to provide additional support if required.
- Transport provider concerns that can't be resolved directly with the school can be directed to the Administration Officer or the Department of State Growth.
- Concerns relating to Bus Attendants are to be managed via school as their direct line manager with support from Learning Services and HR as required.

For concerns relating to the Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability Committee process:

- A review of the Transport Committee's decisions regarding eligibility for assistance can be requested if there is a grievance or disagreement expressed regarding eligibility, or if new information is made available to the committee. Requests for review should be emailed to [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au)
- If further review is required, the [Making a Complaint factsheet](#) provides a guide for next steps.

## 6. Legislation

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
- *Education Act 2016*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Act 2013)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*

## 7. Related Policy

- [Student Transport Management Policy](#)
- [Student Transport Management Procedure](#)

## 8. Supporting information

- Refer to attached appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4



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**Contact:** Disability Services, [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au)

**Last Significant Review:** 1 November 2021

**Review Due:** 1 November 2025

**This Document Replaced:** Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability Guidelines and Procedures

## Appendix One: Levels of Transport Independence

Level of Independence	Supervision Required	Type of Transport
<b>Adult style travel:</b> the student negotiates all public transport services including changes of buses without difficulty.	Nil	General public transport (e.g. bus), school transport services requiring unescorted independent travel to and from a pick up point.
<b>Independent student travel:</b> student is able to wait by the side of the road, recognise their bus and know where to get off. The student is independently able to access the bus, including using the stairs and general seating. The student is also capable of standing while bus is in motion.	Nil	General public transport for familiar route. School transport service over contracted route. (Unescorted independent travel to and from a pick up point.)
<b>Semi-independent:</b> the student requires support to wait by the side of the road and/or recognise the correct bus to catch. However, once supported to get on the bus the student can travel unaccompanied ** The bus driver may have to stop at the appropriate destination. The student may need to be met by an adult at the bus stop.	a) supervision from home and school to pick up point b) supervision from set down point to school or home may be required	General public transport for familiar route. School transport service over contracted route.
<b>Travel assisted:</b> the student is not able to travel in public alone. Supervision is required at all stages of the journey. This supervision may be by a bus attendant or responsible other.	a) Supervision from home to pick up point b) on transport service c) from vehicle to school	i) General public transport only where suitable supervision is available ii) Contracted service providing supervision iii) mini bus or taxi
<b>Dependent:</b> the student may have a medical condition (e.g. severe epilepsy), moderate physical and/or intellectual disability, significant behaviour support needs They may require specialised seating or equipment and/or the close proximity to a supervising adult	a) supervision from home to school as / when necessary b) Assistance with mobility	
<b>Most dependent:</b> the student has a significant disability and requires specialised vehicles to transport them (e.g. wheel chair accessible van)	a) Supervision during travel AND b) assistance with mobility	

\*\*Where a student needs to become familiar with a school bus service in order to develop this semi-independence, the Department of State Growth will receive applications for a parent or carer to travel on the bus with the student for a short period of time (usually not more than two weeks). Approval of adult travel on a dedicated school bus is subject to available space and may include a requirement for the adult passengers to hold WWVP registration. Any adult who travels on the service will need to make their own arrangements for return travel home after the morning service, or to access the school in preparation for the afternoon service as the school bus may depot near the school during the day.

## Appendix Two: Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability Information for Families

The Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability helps eligible students to attend a Government school with transport from home to school.

Transport to and from all schools remains a parent/carer's responsibility. The Transport Assistance Program helps parents/carers with transport to and from school where they are unable to do so. This is at the start and end of the normal school day.

To use the transport program, students have significant disability and usually have extensive level of educational adjustment at school.

The transport program can usually only transport a student to and from a single home address.

### To apply:

Talk to your school about why you need help with transport for your child.

With your school, decide on the level of help your child needs with transport. Use *'Appendix One: Levels of Transport Independence'*.

With your school, fill in the form – *Appendix Three: 'Application for Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability'*. Write on the form your reasons for needing help to get your child to and from school (for example, you don't have a wheelchair accessible car yet)

If your child uses special equipment on the bus to be safe, you need your therapist to fill in the *Appendix Four: 'Therapist Assessment and Recommendations'* form. This needs to be done before your child travels. It will help us know what your child needs to be safe, and help you get the right equipment from your child's NDIS plan.

Your school will send the form to the Transport Committee, who look at all applications. This needs to go to [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au). Usually you apply at the end of one year ready for the next year.

You will get a letter back letting you know what will happen, and if your child can start to use a service to/from school. This is usually a bus when seats are available.

### If you use the transport, you need to:

- Be on time to help your child use the transport.
- You need to take them to and from the pick up point to get them on and off .
- Let the provider know when your child will not be using transport – it is helpful to let them know the day before or before 7am. Check with the provider the best way to contact them.
- Let the school know if your reasons for needing help with transport change, or if you move house.
- Work with your school and provider to help with any plans that your child needs to travel safely.
- Keep helping your child learn to travel safely.

**You must do these things to use the Transport Assistance Program.**

### For further information:

Please contact the Principal of your school first, and then Manager, Disability Services: [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au)

Appendix Three: **Application form: Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability**  
*(Please send completed form to [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au))*

Student Information					
Student Name:					
School:					
Grade:	Date of Birth:				
Days at school:	School Hours (Start/Finish times):				
Address:					
Approx. distance from School:					
Parent/ Guardian Name					
Parent Contact No:					
Alternative Contact No: <i>(Grandparent/family friend)</i>					
Transport Requirements					
<b>Level of Transport Independence</b> <i>(see Appendix One)</i>					
Please circle below:					
1	2	3	4	5	6
<p><b>Special Transport Needs</b> <i>(E.g. wheelchair, harnesses etc)</i></p> <p>Please note that this submission must include an occupational therapy prescription and report for any new student travelling who requires specialist equipment (or a new prescription if anything has changed).</p> <p>Students travelling in wheelchairs must have a headrest, a lap or lap sash belt restraint and 4-point restraint system for the wheelchair.</p> <p>For any OH&amp;S concerns, please seek advice from the treating therapist or Inclusion and Access Coordinator.</p> <p>Please give details <i>(e.g. travels in wheelchair / can transfer to seat / EZ On Vest required)</i></p>					

## Transport Arrangements

Current transport arrangements *(please detail how your child currently travels from home to school to home)*

Transport assistance requested *(please include the days; and when you need help to transport – morning or afternoon)*

Reason for family not being able to provide transport for their child at present (include a timeframe for review if required)  
*(If student has a dual enrolment, please also detail where this is, and how transport will occur to the neighbourhood school)*

Is there a travelling plan in place?    No    Yes    *(Please attach if yes)*

## Signatures

Name and contact number of parent/carer making this application:

Name:

Signature:

Contact number:

Name and contact number of school staff/Principal assisting in this transport application:

Name:

Signature:

Contact number:

## Appendix Four: Therapist Assessment and Recommendations

(Please send to [disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au) together with the Application Form)

### Therapist to complete the following regarding transportation of children with disability

Student name:

School:

#### Wheelchair related requirements (complete if applicable)

Wheelchair model:

Wheelchair restraints:

Student to travel in wheel chair

No Yes *If yes, please complete the following:*

Have you identified 4 anchor points on the wheel chair base? (fixed structures on the base of the chair)

No Yes *Comments:*

Do the restraints and anchor points appear compatible?

No Yes *Comments:*

Does the wheelchair have a headrest?

No Yes *Comments:*

Are you aware of the maintenance needs of the wheelchair?

No Yes *Comments:*

#### Specialised child seats (complete if applicable)

Is the child seat approved for use in a vehicle? (If not, has the system been approved by the RACT?)

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the eye level of the child below the top of the child seat? (If no, the seat is not suitable)

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the angle of the seat belt no greater than 45 degrees?

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the child's weight within the weight limits of the harness/restraint?

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the harness being used with an approved lap belt?

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the lap belt positioned low across the hips? (so that it does not exert any force on the soft tissue area of the pelvis)

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the crotch strap comfortable for the child?

No Yes *Comments:*

If a buckle cover is required for behavioral reasons has RTA approval been obtained?

No Yes *Comments:*

If additional padding is used to provide specific positioning, is the padding firm and weighing under 2kgs? (high density foam is allowable)

No Yes *Comments:*

Is the restraint unmodified?

No Yes *Comments:*

The above is in accordance with the following Australian Standards: AS/NZS 1754-2000, AS/NZS 4370-1996, AS 2942-1994, AS/NZS 3856-1998

## Student requirements

Seating arrangement in vehicle (e.g. wheelchair restraint, occupant restraint, safety harness, buckle cover)  
Please detail ALL requirements:

Additional equipment (e.g. wheelchair tray, bag etc)  
Please detail:

Medical Action Plan attached?	No	Yes	Comments
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## Vehicle Requirements

Please detail vehicle requirements to transport this student (e.g. tracking, vehicle access – hoist, ramps, storage etc)

Please note: Any transport assistance provided to this student is guided by the treating therapist's prescription for the most suitable seating and safety equipment based on assessment of the student's individual characteristics and postural support requirements.

If this changes over time, updated prescription is required.

Therapist name:

Discipline:

Signature:

Date completed: