



WARRINGA PARK SCHOOL

Warringa Park School Transport Policy

Rationale:

Warringa Park School students are transported to and from school by buses which are part of services contracted by the Department of Education and Training (DET). Transport of students to/from school by a contracted bus operator is strictly governed by the need for safe procedures to be observed at all times.

Criteria:

- DTA has been established for each government specialist and integrated school to ensure the efficient provision of transport services. To be eligible for transport assistance, students must reside within the DTA of the specialist or integrated school attended.
- Parents/guardians may choose to enrol their child at any specialist or integrated school outside of their DTA however, this precludes the student from accessing any transport assistance.
- Students must be enrolled at a specialist or integrated school for three or more days per week to be eligible for transport assistance.
- School is compulsory for all Victorian children aged between six and 17 years of age. For the purposes of the SDTP, students are eligible for assistance if they are aged between five and 18 years of age at the time of their application, and reside in Victoria.

Priority of transport considerations

Once the school has determined that transport is required, together the principal, family and Student Transport Unit (STU) will determine the most appropriate form of transport assistance for the student. The Department acknowledges that, due to the individual nature of each student's circumstances and disability, travel arrangements will vary for individual students. If bus travel is determined as the most appropriate form of travel assistance, school principals are responsible for assessing a student's travel application and for informing parents/guardians of the conditions for travel.

Pick-up and drop-off points

Designated pick-up points

Where appropriate, students are expected to meet the bus service at designated pick-up points. This ensures time spent on the bus is kept to a minimum for all students and enables bus services to run as efficiently as possible.

Residential pick-up points

Residential pick-up locations are acceptable under the program but can only be endorsed once all transport factors have been considered, including:

- ability for the vehicle to navigate residential streets without a requirement to reverse or conduct a three-point turn;
- impacts to travel time for other students; and
- the ability for the individual to attend a designated pick up point to enable a consolidated pick up for students.

The principal, if they determine a student is unable to access a pick-up point and requires an alternative transport arrangement (including a residential pick-up point), must seek STU's endorsement. The STU will consider each application for an alternative arrangement on a case-by-case basis.

Designated drop-off points

The Department requires all students accessing a SDTP-provided service to be met by a parent/guardian at the bus or taxi drop-off point. The student may only walk from the drop-off point to their home independently with the written agreement of the school and the parents/guardians. This agreement should only be made when the school and parents/guardians have determined the student is sufficiently capable of independent travel from drop-off point to home.

Students residing less than 4.8km from the school

Parents/guardians are deemed responsible for their child's travel arrangements if they reside less than 4.8km by shortest practicable route (drivable by car) from their local specialist or integrated school. Access to a bus service may be provided to students residing less than 4.8km from their local specialist or integrated school if:

- seating is available on the service after all students with a higher priority of access have been accommodated;
- the student's parents/guardians accept the conditions of travel (which include restrictions such as relinquishing the seat should a student with a higher priority of access require the seat); and
- the Department incurs no additional cost.

Exemptions

If the principal deems it necessary for the student to have unrestricted access to a seat then the parents/guardians may apply through the school for the STU to consider.

Independent Travel

Students travelling independently (in lieu of a bus seat), to and from school will have their public transport ticket (commonly the Victorian Student Pass) reimbursed by the Department through a conveyance allowance even if they reside less than 4.8km from the school/campus attended.

Conveyance allowance

A student who resides at more than one address can be assessed for eligibility from both the primary and secondary residence. For students who are eligible from only the primary or secondary address, payment will be at a pro-rata amount based on the number of days they reside at the address.

For students eligible from both addresses, the school will claim a full allowance from the primary address and allocate appropriate amounts to the parents/guardians. This also applies for multimode allowances.

Travel to alternative locations

The Department only provides services between a student's residence and their local specialist or integrated school. The Department does not provide shuttle services between school campuses, base rooms or annexes, or to any programs not located on the main school site or campus.

Travel to alternative locations, such as respite care, therapy or out of school hours' care, can only be accommodated if:

- students can be dropped off or picked up on their existing bus route;

- the alternative location is within the school's DTA;
- the arrangement does not adversely affect the other passengers or the existing timetable;
- the Department incurs no additional cost; and
- arrangements have been made for supervision at pick-up and drop-off points (for example, with respite facility staff).

Specialist or integrated schools that believe student transport services could be improved with the introduction of direct transport or shuttle services should contact the STU and request a comprehensive review of their network to occur for consideration of transport redesign.

Other exceptional circumstances or appeals or special cases

Parent/guardians wishing to apply for special consideration or appeal a transport decision must make an application through their school. Schools must have the application endorsed by their regional office prior to submitting it to the STU at student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Types of Assistance Available

The Department offers several different types of transport assistance under the SDTP.

Schools are to discuss with parents/guardians the types of transport assistance at enrolment time. It is an opportunity for parents/guardians to consider how they may contribute towards their child's transport needs and also consider their child's long-term transport-related education goals, which may include learning to be an independent traveller.

1. Travel education:

There is an expectation that students with access to public transport and assessed as cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally able will or will be taught to travel independently to and from school.

2. Conveyance allowance

Conveyance allowance provides financial assistance to parents/guardians transporting their child to and from school or to students travelling independently to and from school using public transport. Students may be eligible for the conveyance allowance if a physical, behavioural or health reason prevents them from accessing the SDTP-provided bus. The STU will require documentation supporting the conveyance allowance claim before it can be submitted to the Conveyance Allowance Unit for payment.

3. Multimode conveyance allowances

Multimode conveyance allowance applies when a student uses more than one mode of transport (e.g. private car and SDTP school bus) for a journey between home and school.

A conveyance allowance may be granted at the appropriate rate for private car or public transport where the distance travelled is 4.8km or more for each leg of the journey. This provision does not apply if the journey could have been undertaken using a single mode transport or one leg of the journey is less than 4.8km. Further information, please refer to the Conveyance Allowance Program Policy and Procedures available at: [Student Transport](#)

SDTP online learning module

The Department has developed an SDTP online learning module to educate school and bus staff about their roles and responsibilities under the program. All school staff with a role in the SDTP should complete the module prior to the commencement of each school year or, for new staff, before they commence an SDTP

related task. For school staff, the module is available from the Department's Learning Management System, LearnED, through eduPay. Advice on accessing LearnED is available on the Department's website at: [LearnED](#)

Individual travel plans

All students in receipt of transport assistance must have an individual travel plan. Travel plans are designed to ensure the school, parents/guardians and bus operators (where appropriate) are informed and able to meet each child's needs and cater for their circumstances. Parents/guardians and where possible students, should be involved in the development of their child's travel plan.

Where a student has written agreement from the school and the parents/guardians to travel independently from the drop-off point to their home, this should be recorded in the student's individual travel plan.

Electronic student manifest system

All SDTP bus services are to be fitted with an Electronic Student Manifest System (ESMS). The ESMS will comprise of an electronic student manifest device (tablet/iPad or similar) and an electronic scanning device (both fitted inside the vehicle) supported by a software application that will contain and coordinate all required information for schools, students and bus operators to deliver the SDTP.

The electronic student manifest device will be capable of recording student movements onto and off of the bus in the morning and afternoon; the electronic scanning device will enable bus staff (driver and supervisor) to walk to the rear of the bus to scan a fitted card reader (or similar) indicating and recording that all students have left the vehicle.

Electronic student manifest device

The electronic student manifest device will be utilised by bus staff when providing SDTP services. Through an upload of school and student information relevant for the SDTP, the electronic student manifest device will contain:

- student details including parent/guardian contact information,
- student residential addresses and medical details (as required for bus travel)
- student bus stopping locations and bus timetables
- student travel plans and seating locations
- student movements on and off the bus services; and
- will record the transfer of duty of care for students from bus to school.

Electronic scanning device

Enables bus staff to walk to the internal rear of the bus to ensure that the vehicle is clear of students and property. Bus staff will then scan a fitted card reader (or similar) that will electronically record that the visual inspection has been completed.

Bus staff must complete this activity prior to departing the school in the morning and again at the end of the afternoon service. When the fitted card reader has been scanned, the electronic student manifest device will record that the bus is cleared of students and property, enabling the bus staff to continue to their next destination. The STU, when required, can audit the completion rates of the scanning devices.

School staff duties

The electronic student manifest system, when implemented at schools on a school-provided device (e.g. tablet, iPad etc.) will require school staff involved in the arrival and departure of student transport services to record student movements off of and onto bus services at the school. The electronic student manifest system will replace paper-based systems.

To further strengthen safety for students, school staff are also required to confirm that the bus service is clear of students (walk the bus) prior to the bus departing the school after the morning service. School staff are not required to scan the fitted card read.

Training for bus operators

Schools are expected to provide any training they deem necessary to bus operators and their staff. This may include inviting them to school-run programs or more ad-hoc sessions at times of mutual agreement.

The training provided by a school may include:

- clear communication of roles and responsibilities
- guidance on communication with the school, students and parents/guardians
- an explanation of safety obligations and reporting arrangements
- consideration of each student travelling and of any necessary information to ensure safe passage and individual requirements or concerns
- guidance on communication and management of the school's student cohort
- a review of proposed routes and stop locations.

It is important this training is appropriate given the roles of the drivers and supervisors. Schools should note that the bus operator contracts include financial provision for staff to attend training offered by schools.

Bus Travel

- All drivers and chaperones will be familiar with the school transport guidelines.
- A speed limit of 10 kph is to be observed within the school grounds at all times.
- Students are to be clear of the area around the buses as they alight.
- All chaperones of contract buses must ensure that passengers are seated at all times.
- Students must never be left unsupervised in buses.
- Drivers are not to leave vehicles unattended with the engine running.
- The Principal will make a decision regarding the transport of any equipment after consultation with the bus company concerned.
- Bus rolls will be marked by designated school staff before students leave the bus each morning and again after the students have boarded the bus in the afternoon. Buses should not depart until all children have been accounted for.
- Any messages for chaperones or drivers regarding changes to the normal travelling routine of students will be attached to the rolls and handed to chaperones by the duty teachers.
- All statutory road laws and signs are to be observed.
- Upon arrival at the school, responsibility for the students remains with the Chaperone until a staff member takes over responsibility of the students.
- Parents/carers must contact Warringa Park School if any changes are to be made to their child's bus route. The school will then consult with the bus company concerned.

- If upon arrival in the morning, there is no one at the student's bus stop, the driver will wait **3 minutes** before continuing on the run.
- In the afternoons, if there is no adult to meet the student, the drivers have been instructed to wait **3 minutes** after the designated time at the usual set down point. The bus will then continue on with the normal run. Parents can contact the bus and arrange to meet it en route to collect children. If no contact occurs between parents and the bus by the end of the run, bus staff will then contact the school and/student's emergency contact phone numbers regarding supervision of the student.
- Buses are requested not to arrive prior to 8:50am. Buses should be at the school by 2:50pm.
- When a student is picked up early by a parent then that child will be marked off the bus roll by the bus coordinator.
- Chaperones are requested to observe and assist when students are embarking or disembark
- Each bus has a chaperone employed by the bus company. Students must be supervised at all times. All unacceptable student behaviour must be reported to the Principal and the bus company as soon as possible.
- Consequences will be put in place for students whose behaviour is such that the health and safety of others is put at risk. The severity of the consequences will be dependent upon the circumstances of an incident. The Principal or delegate will contact the student's parents.
- Bus chaperones are required to have a fully charged mobile phone which can be used at all times.
- Bus Chaperones will be provided with contact phone numbers for the students on their buses.
- Bus chaperones will be provided with emergency management plans for those students who require them.
- Students travelling in their wheelchairs must have their lap belt and chest harnesses (if any) secured and they must have a headrest on their wheelchair to be safe on the bus
- Any equipment prescribed must be used solely by the student it was prescribed for.
- Drivers and chaperones under no circumstances are to physically punish a student or physically retaliate to a student's behaviour.
- All staff that transport students should treat students with respect and where possible de-escalate behaviour of concern.
- Bus Drivers and Chaperones should at all times display a professional behaviour towards the school community.

Parent Responsibilities

- Parents are to escort students to the bus or to ensure students meet the bus safely and on time each morning.
- Students become the responsibility of the chaperone as they board the bus.
- Parents are responsible for meeting students from the bus in the afternoons, or for ensuring they have the appropriate level of supervision.
- Parents/carers are requested to contact the bus chaperone concerned directly if a morning pickup needs to be cancelled because of absence/illness etc.
- The onus is on parents to contact the school before 2:45 pm if they are unable to be present at the designated set down time.
- Parents should notify the administration office at the school, in writing, if someone other than the regular person is to meet the bus at the pick up or set down points.
- Parents/carers are required to inform the school and the bus company chaperone of any special circumstances that are important for the well-being of their child. This includes any special procedures that need to be followed in an emergency situation.
- ALL communication from parents concerning students should be directed to school administration, NOT

to the bus staff.

- If a student becomes ill outside of school hours and the student will not be attending school, parents are to contact the bus company as soon as possible.
- Any changes to students home or emergency phone numbers must be notified directly and promptly to the school office.

Bus Breakdowns

- In the case of the bus breaking down, chaperones/drivers will phone the bus company first to report the emergency. Drivers will then phone all parents and caregivers concerned. The bus company will phone and inform the school.

Safety During Travel

- Miscellaneous items cannot be transported if they pose a problem in terms of safety.
- The only luggage to be transported on a regular basis is student's school bags.
- Eating and drinking on the bus is not permitted at any time.
- Students are to remain seated and have their seat belts on at all times.
- Seat belts are to be supplied by the bus company. Any other form of restraint supplied by parents would need to be approved by the bus company, DET and the school.
- Students who require a harness and/or buckle guard need a Doctors Certificate.

Emergency Procedures

- In case of an emergency or accident, the role of the Bus Chaperone is to assess the situation, call the emergency services (if necessary), notify the school office (97495774) or Principal (Marie Hayes – 04 2092 0885) of the situation and then contact the Bus Company. Depending on the severity of the situation, the Bus Driver may need to do this as the Bus Chaperone may need to attend to the students.
- The Transport Coordinator, Wendy Harrison will seek advice from the Principal regarding communications with parents/carers and contact the Department of Education's Emergency & Security Management on 9589 6266.
- The Bus Chaperone, with the assistance of the driver (if possible), is to attend to the needs of the students regarding their safety, first aid and/or security.
- The Bus Chaperone needs to check medical information provided by the school and be prepared to provide this to emergency services if required.
- The Bus Chaperone will then follow the directions of Emergency Services personnel when attending to this emergency.

Parents and the bus company will be notified well in advance of any pupil free days and when there are alterations to dismissal times such as early dismissal at end of term and end of year.

Managing Complaints

Any concerns should be raised by parents and caregivers with the school in the first instance.

The school will contact the bus company where required.

The bus companies for Warringa Park School are:

Westrans
Phone: 9368 6000

SITA Coaches
Phone: 9689 7999

Bacchus Marsh Coaches
Phone: 5366 3444

The school transport coordinator is: Wendy Harrison Phone: 9749 5774

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle. Feedback will be sought regularly from the bus companies.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

18/03/19