

Supporting information for the

School transport assistance program for students with disability procedure

Contents

This supporting information pack is to be read in conjunction with the [School transport assistance program for students with disability procedure](#).

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Uncontrolled copy. Refer to the Department of Education Policy and Procedure Register at <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/school-transport-assistance-program-for-students-with-disability-procedure> to ensure you have the most current version of this document.

Transport assistance eligibility

The Department of Education (DoE) recognises there may be additional challenges for parents or carers of some students with disability in fulfilling their responsibility to arrange transport between home and school. School transport assistance is available to eligible students between home and school at the start and end of the student's school day.

Assistance will **not** be considered through this program, where a student is:

- living at a postcode other than 4000-4895
- attending TAFE; work experience; school camps; excursions or sporting activities
- travelling between schools during the school day
- visiting Australia as an exchange student; on a tourist or visitor visa and **not** issued with a *Confirmation of Enrolment* from Education Queensland International
- enrolled in a school outside the state of Queensland; a non-state school other than Autism Queensland (Sunnybank or Brighton)
- does not meet eligibility as outlined below.

Eligibility

Eligibility for transport assistance is assessed according to 2 criteria: **Criterion 1 – Disability** and **Criterion 2 – Enrolment**. Where it is clear the student will not meet Criterion 1 and is therefore not eligible, an application is not required unless specifically requested by a parent or carer, relevant stakeholder or DoE officers.

Criterion 1 – Disability

The student has a disability, as defined by the [Disability Discrimination Act \(DDA\) 1992 \(Cwth\)](#), that has a functional impact on the student's travel to and from school.

Criterion 2 – Enrolment

The student must:

- have an active or future enrolment/registration at a Queensland state primary, secondary or special school, or Early Childhood Development Program nearest to their place of residence
- be attending the Queensland Children's Hospital school or associated education programs; or qualify to be considered for assistance under exceptional circumstances.

Transport assistance distance check process

The Central Office Students with Disability School Transport Team complete distance check requests using a specialised mapping program with reference to the Directory of Special Education Programs:

- home to school distances are used in determining student eligibility for transport assistance
- distances between transport addresses (other than the student's home) and school can be requested as needed for transport arrangements.

Exceptional circumstances

The following exceptional circumstances may be considered in determining the student's eligibility:

- student is attending a school **other** than the nearest school or nearest school with a special education program or school with specialised support in the area of vision impairment or hearing impairment.
- transport arrangements **exceed** the procedure conditions
 - cost – fares above \$400 GST inclusive per week (for student / student and individual escort)
 - time – journey time (one way) is more than one hour and 15 minutes
 - multiple addresses – where arranging travel to multiple addresses would have an unfavourable impact on other transported students or the transport operator
- **maintaining program continuity** is essential for the student's education and/or wellbeing. For example, student is:
 - living in temporary care arrangements such as [Out of Home Care \(OOHC\)](#)
 - in the final year of a sector of schooling (e.g. Year 6 or Year 12), or has moved and the enrolled school is no longer the nearest school or nearest school with a specialised program for their disability
 - living in a split parenting arrangement where both parents have moved, and the enrolled school is no longer the nearest school or nearest school with specialised support in the area of the student's disability
 - in a **transition program** between schools or schooling sectors e.g. between primary and special school (ONLY for the transport between home and school)
- circumstances **other** than those above that meet the following principles of:
 - equity of access to education for students with disability
 - responsible use of available resources.

Exceptional circumstance applications may be approved with specific conditions such as a limited time frame or for a set purpose.

Transport assistance assessment

Eligible students are assessed to identify the most appropriate type of transport assistance using a 6-point travel capability rating system outlined in the table below.

Student travel capability

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Independent travel | The student can travel independently and negotiate all public transport services including all required transfers on to and off trains, buses and/or ferries. |
| 2. Semi-independent travel | The student can wait at the appropriate place to board a train, bus (public or school) and/or ferry and knows where/when to alight. The student is able to board the bus, train and/or ferry and travel safely to the destination in a single journey. |
| 3. Supported travel | The student requires supervision while waiting at the appropriate place to board public transport. Once aboard the student can complete a single journey (no transfers) unaccompanied but may need to be met at the destination by an adult. |
| 4. Travel assisted | The student is not able to travel by public transport unless accompanied by an Individual Escort. |
| 5. Dependent travel | The student is unable to use public transport to travel and requires travel in a non-modified vehicle (e.g. private motor vehicle, taxi or bus) with or without an Individual Escort. |
| 6. Modified vehicle travel | The student is unable to travel on public transport and requires travel in a modified vehicle (e.g. wheelchair accessible taxi or minibus) with or without an Individual Escort. |

As appropriate to the student's travel capability and available transport options, one or more of the following transport types may be recommended by the assessor:

Conveyance:

- An allowance paid directly to parents or carers for private conveyance of eligible students between home and school.

Category 1 transport assistance:

- Passes or public transport.

Category 2 transport assistance:

- Arrangement of specially contracted taxi or minibus services
- This may be recommended when a student is unable to travel independently and cost, time and address conditions are met; or family circumstances require consideration.
- Where cost, time and nearest school are not met, the application may be considered under exceptional circumstances for a set purpose and limited timeframe.

Individual Escorts

An Individual Escort is an adult (18 years of age or older) who is either:

- the parent/carer
- a person identified by the parent/carer who holds a current Blue Card
- where the above is not possible, a person employed by the school as a teacher aide.

The person must have the skills required to appropriately support the student's safe travel.

Responsibility for sourcing and approving an Individual Escort

- All parties involved in supporting the student are responsible for ensuring that a suitable escort is identified. Where possible, adult family members are the preferred option.
- Transport applications must be approved in OneSchool prior to submitting an [Individual escort return journey application](#) (DoE employees only).
- The principal is responsible for ensuring that any person engaged as an escort, whether employed or volunteering, meets all legal requirements for working with children and has the necessary skills to support the student's safe travel.
- The school is responsible for monitoring and supporting the Individual Escort regardless of the person's employment status.
- The school must ensure appropriate processes are in place to monitor and review the student's safe travel.
- If monitoring indicates the Individual Escort is no longer required, the school must initiate a review of the student's transport arrangement.
- Schools are to follow the [School transport—payment for school arranged travel escort \(individual travel support\) for students with disability](#) appropriation profile, including to seek reimbursement of teacher aide time in undertaking individual escort duties.

Family circumstances

To meet this condition where Category 2 transport is being considered, **one** of the following must be identified.

- **Parent/carers have no means of providing transport:** circumstances such as the family not having an available vehicle/modified vehicle or anyone able to drive an available vehicle.
- **Parent/carers are physically unable to transport the student:** circumstances such as adult family members unable to physically transport the student due to their own disability or to supervise the student during travel.
- **Parent/carers have significant obligations which mean they are unable to transport or supervise the student during travel:** circumstances such as adult family members having obligations which means they are not able to transport the student or provide the level of supervision required for the student's safe travel.

Criteria eligibility outcome matrix

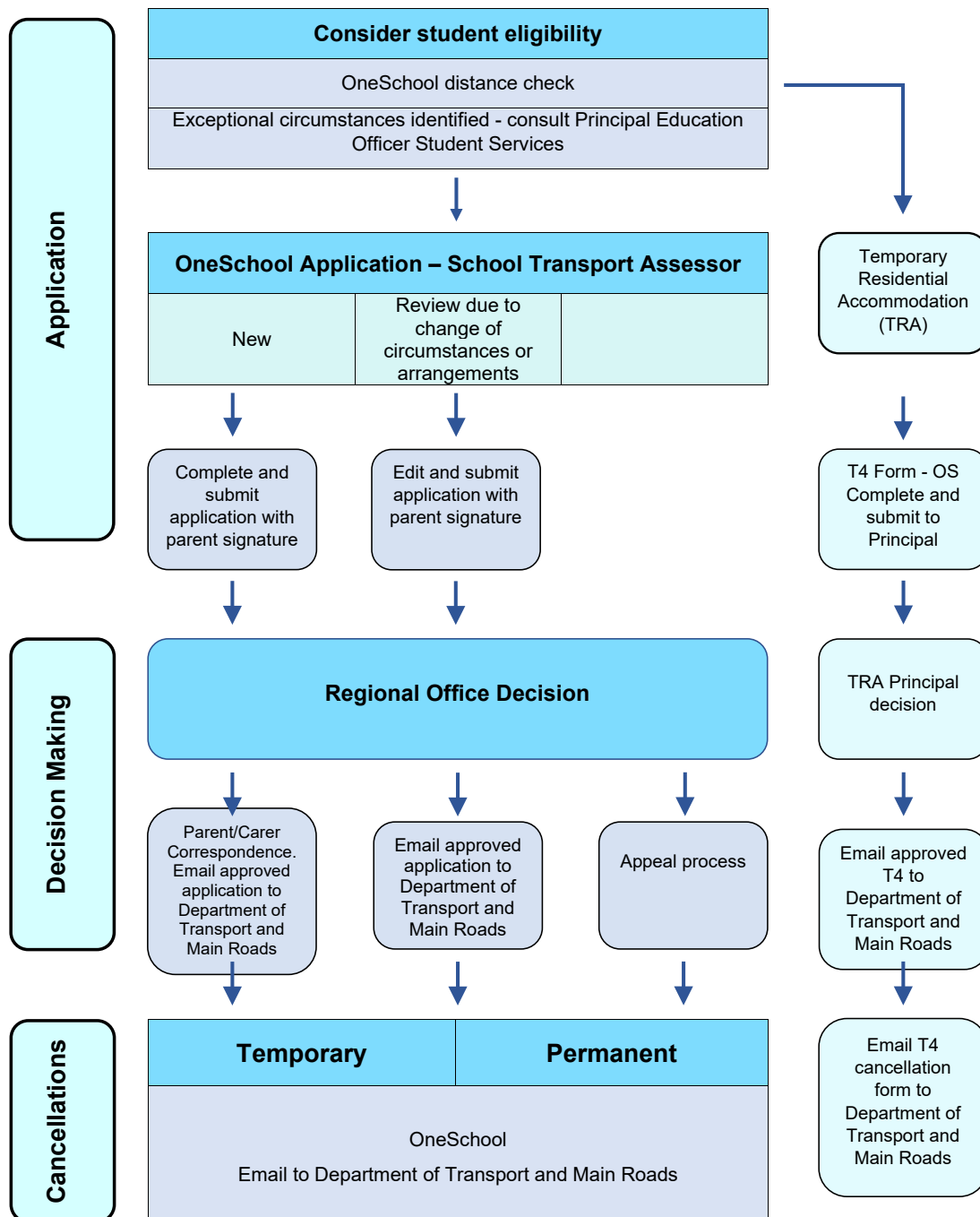
| Current travel capability rating | Category conditions to be met | | | Transport type options |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Family circumstances | or | Anticipated future travel skills | |
| 1, 2, 3, 4 | N/A | | N/A | Conveyance |
| 1, 2, 3, 4 | N/A | | N/A | Conveyance and/or Category 1 |
| 4 | Yes | | N/A | Category 2 |
| 5, 6 | No | | No | Conveyance |
| 5, 6 | Yes | | No | Conveyance and/or Category 2 |
| 5, 6 | No | | Yes | Conveyance and/or Category 2 |

Application process flowchart

Applications for school transport assistance may be initiated by parents, carers or school staff, where the student is attending a state school and has a disability that necessitates transport to or from school.

The application review and cancellation processes take place in the student's OneSchool Transport record. Step-by-step instructions are available in the [OneSchool school transport instructions](#) (DoE employees only).

The flowchart for school transport assistance illustrates the application process and should be read in conjunction with the [procedure](#).



Parents and carers program overview

It is the responsibility of Queensland parents and carers to make suitable travel arrangements for their child between home and school. Where you identify challenges in fulfilling this responsibility for your child with disability, you can request an assessment for eligibility from this program.

Assessment

An assessment considering disability and enrolment criteria is completed at the school by a teacher trained in this procedure (School Transport Assessor). The school transport assessor will explain the assessment process to you. You and other relevant stakeholders will be asked to provide information to accurately complete this assessment.

The school transport assessor will discuss your responsibilities to support your child's safe travel between home and school in relation to one of the following transport assistance types:

- *Conveyance* – an allowance for parent/carers who arrange for their child to be privately transported to school
- *Category 1* – public transport passes (bus, rail or ferry)
- *Category 2* – specially contracted minibus or taxi.

Recommendation

The school transport assessor determines and recommends your child's eligibility for assistance and, where eligible, the most appropriate available transport type. Where eligibility is recommended you will receive a copy of the application. You will be asked to complete and return the page with the *Parent/Carer Declaration* section.

The school transport assessor will submit the application for decision making by the Principal Education Officer, Student Services or delegate at the relevant regional office. You will be advised in writing of the transport application decision. If you have grounds to appeal this decision, you will be provided with the information for the appeal process.

Approved applications are forwarded to the Department of Transport and Main Roads for arrangement of transport. Where there are issues with transport availability further discussion may be required.

Review

Any change in your child's circumstances that may affect transport arrangements will require an immediate review of eligibility and/or arrangements.

Parent and carer responsibilities

Parents and Carers, together with Queensland Government staff and transport providers, have key roles and responsibilities in the safe transport of students to school. This information sheet explains the responsibilities of parent/carers in supporting the safe, responsible travel of their children between home and school.

You can enhance your child's experience by discussing good travel practices with your child at home and possible consequences for misconduct. It is important you are aware as a result of your child's behaviour you may be required to make amends with transport operators for any damage, soiling and subsequent vehicle time off the road.

Translink's [School travel](#) website provides information about safety, tickets, and travel for school students in Queensland, including a [student code of conduct](#).

Contact with the School Transport Assessor is required **as soon as possible** with information that may affect transport arrangements, e.g. new address details, contact details, days/times, your child's health and well-being, concerns regarding transport arrangements.

Parents or carers are not to approach transport operators directly to make changes (such as change of collection or drop of address or changes to days travelling) **except when their child will be absent from school**.

Conveyance

Where *Conveyance* is the Department of Education approved transport assistance for your child, the allowance is paid twice a year (in the first week of holidays in June/July and December). This allowance is paid directly into your bank account by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). Please ensure your school office has your up to date bank details.

Category 1 – Public transport (Bus/Rail/Ferry)

Where *Category 1* is the Department of Education approved transport assistance for your child, it is your responsibility to ensure transport passes (for travel between home and school) are used by your eligible child only.

Category 2 – Contract transport (Minibus or Taxi)

Where *Category 2* is the Department of Education approved transport assistance for your child, you have a number of responsibilities to be fulfilled for the continuation of transport arrangements.

These are:

- **only the child approved to travel on contract transport can do so**
- **a responsible adult** (you **or** a person over the age of 18 with contact details provided to the operator) is ready to meet the transport driver at the specified time and place (**AM** and/or **PM journey**)
- provide any car seats or specialised equipment that your child requires to travel safely such as seatbelt harness, seatbelt buckle guards or other specialised seating. It is the responsible adults role to safely secure the child in and out of the seat. The driver will ensure the item is appropriately anchored/attached to the vehicle

- immediately contact the **transport operator and school** as early as possible when your child is going to be **absent** due to illness, holidays etc.
- to be available for discussions about the behaviour of your child.

Temporary Residential Accommodation

Requests for transport assistance should be made to the school transport assessor as early as possible.

Only the student is transported between school and the accommodation centre.

You are responsible for:

- the delivery and collection of medication and belongings to the accommodation centre
- transport of your child between home and the accommodation centre.

Transport appeal process

School transport assessor invites parent/carer to contact Principal Education Officer, Student Services (PEOSS) to discuss the decision.

Where parent/carer chooses to appeal the decision, the following is to be provided:

- [Transport appeal process and FAQs](#) (this document)
- [Transport appeal submission](#)

Within 10 working days from the date on the approved/not approved transport assistance letter, the Executive Director, Regional Operations Officer (ED ROOs) or delegate receives the parent/carer submission appealing against the PEOSS transport assistance decision.

ED ROOs or delegate considers all relevant information and seeks advice from Manager - within State Schools Strategy or delegate.

ED ROOs or delegate arranges and holds interviews where required.

Within 10 days from receiving the appeal submission, the ED ROOs or delegate makes a decision. ED ROOs or delegate advises PEOSS of decision. Appeal against transport assistance decision correspondence is prepared.

Correspondence regarding the ED ROOs or delegate appeal decision outcome is sent to all relevant parties. The ED ROOs or delegate's decision is final.

Transport appeal frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Who can make a submission?

- Parents/carers of the student named in the *Approved or Not Approved for Transport* letter may make a submission appealing the decision of the Principal Education Officer, Student Services (PEOSS) or delegate.
- The purpose of the submission is to provide the Executive Director, Regional Operations Officer (ED ROOs) with information to assist in their review of the original decision as stated in the *Approved or Not Approved for Transport* letter. A new decision will be made by the ED ROOs or delegate.
- This new decision may either support or change the original decision by the PEOSS or delegate. The ED ROOs or delegate's decision is FINAL.

How can I make a submission?

- The submission is to be made in writing, however if it is more appropriate for you to make an oral submission, this can be arranged at an appointed time.
- In the case of an oral submission, an independent third person would be available to take notes and provide an agreed record to all parties present.
- You may have assistance in preparing the submission from others or have it prepared for you.

When can I make a submission?

- A submission must be received at the relevant Regional Office **no later than 10 working days** after the date stated on the *Approved or Not Approved for Transport* letter.

What should I include?

- You should state the reason you question the decision about the form of transport assistance or transport eligibility and provide facts that support your case. The reasons should be based on the information in the *reasons transport assistance was not approved* as stated in the *Not Approved for Transport* letter and in particular why any information is incorrect or which you believe has been misinterpreted.
- In your submission you should comment on any additional information or documents provided to you by the PEOSS.
- Provide copies of any documents which you consider to be relevant to supporting your case.

What happens with the information I provide?

- Any information you provide in this submission will be used by the ED ROOs to review the decision of the PEOSS on the transport assistance for your child.
- Except as above, the information will not be disclosed to any other department, agency or person unless you consent to the disclosure.

When will a decision be made?

- The ED ROOs or delegate will make a decision **within 10 working days** of receiving your submission. You will then receive correspondence shortly after, stating the outcome.