

Assisted School Travel Program – Eligibility Summary

The Department of Education and Communities' Assisted School Travel Program provides specialised transport assistance for eligible students with disability to travel to and from school. The Program provides travel support services primarily between a student's permanent place of residence and school.

The program is targeted towards supporting eligible students who are unable to travel independently or access the Transport for NSW School Student Transport Scheme, and who need transport assistance in order to attend school.

The Program's eligibility criteria and information which will be taken into consideration in the assessment of applications are summarised hereunder. Full details of the Program can be found in the Assisted School Travel Program [Guidelines](#).

General Criteria

To be eligible to apply for access to assisted school travel services, a student must:

- a) be a permanent resident of New South Wales; and
- b) be assessed as having identified disability according to the Department's established Disability Criteria (May 2003); and
- c) be enrolled in a government or registered non-government school in New South Wales at school entry level (Kindergarten or equivalent) as a minimum, or be accessing a special education early intervention program specifically tailored to prepare students with disability for entry into formal education one year before formal school entry into a government or registered non-government school in New South Wales; and
- d) be enrolled in a special school or support class specifically for students with disability; or require high level assistance for mobility purposes (for example, use of a wheelchair or other form of mobility aid) if enrolled in a mainstream class; and
- e) have parents and/or carers who have demonstrated their inability to provide or arrange travel for the student to and from school either fully or in part; and
- f) be assessed as being unable to travel independently; and
- g) be enrolled in the closest appropriate government or registered non-government school to their home.

The provision of assistance under the program is dependent on students continuing to meet the eligibility criteria following regular reviews of students' needs and circumstances.

Distance and Time

Generally 40 kilometres from the student's place of residence to the school would be considered a maximum distance for assisted school travel services. Travel time of up to 60 minutes would be ideal, with a maximum of 90 minutes on each one way trip. For applications where the estimated travel time or distance exceeds these levels, consideration of the impact of the time travelled on the student's ability to achieve learning outcomes and their general health, wellbeing and safety will be required to determine the most appropriate form of assistance. These measures will be used as a guide only, and will be considered in light of the nature of the student's disability and other identified travel support needs.

Students from Overseas

Overseas students living in New South Wales who are eligible for a free government education are also able to access assisted school travel if they meet the Program's eligibility requirements. Those students who are not eligible for a free government education are not eligible to access assisted school travel.

Application and Assessment Process

To apply for assistance under the Assisted School Travel Program, parents/carers are required to complete Part A of the [Application for Assisted School Travel](#). Part B of the application form will be completed by the school Principal and/or the learning support team coordinator.

Where possible, the Department will process applications within 7 working days of receipt and parents/carers and the student's school will be advised in writing of the result of the assessment process. If the application is not approved, the parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school in the first instance to discuss the eligibility criteria and the reasons for non-approval. The school or the parents/carers may then contact the Assisted School Travel Program to discuss the application and if applicable, provide additional information to support the student's application for assisted school travel. The parents/carers can also seek advice on the process to lodge an appeal should the application remain not approved.

Variations to approved transport arrangements

For students approved to access transport services, requests for permanent or temporary variations to transport services will be sent by the school to the Assisted School Travel Program for processing. For students who are changing residential address on a permanent basis or seeking to access transport services in addition to that already approved, Part A of the [Application for Assisted School Travel](#) must be completed by the student's parents or carers and forwarded with the [Variation to Approved Transport Arrangements](#) form for processing.

For permanent variations, the Assisted School Travel Program will consider whether the student is still attending the nearest appropriate school to the new residential address, and in processing the variation request, will review the student's eligibility for continuing support.

Temporary variations may be provided where such arrangements can be accommodated within existing transport services and with minimal impact on distances travelled and the amount of time students spend in transit. The scope of the program does not however, allow transport services to be created for the sole purpose of transporting students to and/or from respite care services, work placements, VET Programs or other similar activities.

Review

School personnel in partnership with parents/carers monitor the progress of students who have additional support needs at least once a year. Parents/carers are required to notify the school Principal of any change in circumstances likely to affect the student's entitlement to or need for transport assistance.

ASTP staff may also seek a review of the travel support needs of a student by a school or region in circumstances where temporary approvals have been granted or where information is received regarding changes in student needs or family circumstances. A review of student travel support needs/eligibility may also be required following any incident which has the potential to impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of any individual on the transport run. This may require a review of the student's behaviour management plan or health care plan as appropriate.

Further Information

For enquiries regarding eligibility and applications for access to transport services under the Assisted School Travel Program, please contact your School Principal.

Information is also available from the Department's Assisted School Travel Program and contact can be made by email to generalenquiries.astp@det.nsw.edu.au or telephone 1300 338 278.