



Education  
and Training

# School Bus Program

User Guide

January 2016



**Published by the  
Department of Education Training**

Melbourne

January 2016

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2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002.

ISBN [to be inserted if required]

This document is also available on the internet at

[www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport)

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# 1. Introduction

While parents/guardians have primary responsibility for transporting their children to and from school, the School Bus Program (SBP) assists families in rural and regional Victoria by transporting students to and from schools (government and non-government students).

In delivering the SBP, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) administers the School Bus Program as directed by the School Bus Program policy and procedures document (School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016) as issued by the Student Transport Unit (STU) of the Department of Education and Training (DET).

The School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016 details the specific roles of all stakeholders in administering the School Bus Program.

## Purpose

The DET User Guide is targeted towards school administrators coordinating bus services as part of the School Bus Program. This guide is designed to support school bus administrators/coordinators in coordinating and managing the administration tasks for the effective delivery of the School Bus Program.

Administering the School Bus Program at coordinating and client schools can be a complex task; the STU is continually looking to improve the support provided to schools and school bus coordinators.

This guide is not designed to replace the School Bus Program policy and the policy should always be referred to for clarification and direction.

In 2015 the STU developed and introduced, within this guide, some tools for use such as; the Bus Roll template, the Coordinator Checklist and the already in use, Fares Acquittal template.

Student Transport believes these new tools will assist in your role as School bus administrators/coordinators and should assist in reducing the administrative workload once established.

This guide will be enhanced following feedback provided by School Bus Coordinators and to ensure you have the most recent document, refer to the Student Transport webpages.

Student Transport encourages schools to provide feedback in relation to improving this guide directly to the Student Transport Unit email at: [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## 2. Eligibility for the School Bus Program

Determining student eligibility and communicating the status of eligibility to parents/guardians and travellers should be considered as one of the more important stages of the application processes. Ensuring the eligibility assessment on the application is correct from day one will enable success when administering the SBP.

A student must meet all of the criteria detailed below to be eligible for School Bus Program services; eligible students access School Bus Program services at no cost.

Measured by the shortest practicable route (for definition, refer to the 6 [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures January 2016](#)) students are expected to use public transport where a service is available within 1.6 km of their home or closer to their home, than the nearest school bus service to the school they attend. This applies to both students who access School Bus Program at no cost and fare paying students.

If you are unsure how to determine what Public Transport services exist in your area, please access the PTV Journey planner at [ptv.vic.gov.au](http://ptv.vic.gov.au)

### Key eligibility criteria

The below represents a summary of the key eligibility criteria, please refer to page 2 (and onwards) of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) for complete and specific details.

### Criteria 1 - Closest appropriate school

To be eligible for the School Bus Program, students must attend their nearest school/campus appropriate to their year level. This distance is measured as the shortest practicable route drivable by car from student's residential address to the school/campus attended.

The closest 'appropriate' school for students attending non-government schools is determined by the denomination of the school.

See page 3 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) for additional information.

### Criteria 2 – Reside 4.8 km or more from the school

To be eligible for the School Bus Program, students must reside 4.8 km or more from the school/campus they attend. This distance is measured as the shortest practicable route, drivable by car, from a gate or driveway of a student's residence to the main school/campus entrance.

See page 5 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) for additional information.

### Criteria 3 – Be of school age and reside in Victoria

School is compulsory for all Victorian children aged between six and 17 years of age. For the purposes of the School Bus Program, students are eligible for services if they are aged between five and 18 years of age at the time of their application, and reside in Victoria.

See page 5 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) for additional information.

### Ineligible Travellers (approved exemptions)

There are some limited exemption categories where a student may be ineligible for the School Bus Program but exempt from paying a fare.

The coordinating principal may approve exemptions in line with the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) (p.7). If further clarification is required please contact the STU.

### Ineligible Travellers (required to pay a fare)

Students not meeting the eligibility criteria, or qualifying for an exemption, may be able to access an existing School Bus Program service (where seat availability exists) upon payment of a fare. Fare payment must be made in advance of travel.

See page 12 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) for additional information. Please refer to page 17 of this document for fare collection information.

Ineligible traveller arrangements, both exemption and fare payer, will be periodically reviewed by the department.

### Priority of Access

Where demand for a SBP service outweighs the capacity of the vehicle, priority of traveller access applies; this can be a difficult process to communicate.

It is not uncommon for schools to have a wait list of students. Schools will need to manage applications as they are provided to ensure that the priority of access is maintained.

Early communication to parents/guardians of waitlisted students is a key to ensuring reduced complaints as it enables the parent/guardians to seek alternative transport assistance. Note: waitlisted students may be eligible for the Conveyance Allowance.

Please refer to page 2 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) for further information and clarification.

### Local Arrangements

STU is aware that in some school networks, historical local arrangements have been developed. Unless documented and approved by the STU, all historical arrangements should be reviewed annually by the bus coordinator in attempt to return to the correct application of policy - and it may be pertinent to revisit the policy for understanding and clarity. Please contact the STU for assistance/approval or revision of local arrangements.

### 3. My role in the School Bus Program

Schools are categorised as either coordinating schools or client schools.

All schools are responsible for communicating travel options to families however the roles of the coordinating school and the client school do vary. All schools within a network must adhere to the requirements of the School Bus Program policy.

#### Coordinating and Client school meetings

Student Transport actively encourages frequent communication between all schools within the school bus network and recommends that schools meet at minimum once per term to discuss school bus matters.

These meetings will enable open communication within the network and will ensure consistency in policy application at all schools.

### Coordinating School Responsibilities

#### Travel Approval

- Schools are responsible for communicating the travel options that exist in the area to parents upon enquiry at school or at enrolment. Schools must familiarise themselves with the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) in order to respond to enquiries made by parents about the program.
- When families enquire about transport options, schools should provide families with the [School Bus Program Eligibility Guide for Families](#) and/or direct them to the '[Travelling to School](#)' page on the Department's website.
- All schools accessing the School Bus Program are responsible for providing eligibility information to their families regarding the School Bus Program (including distributing the appropriate DET application form) and ensuring that when these are returned, all fields are completed (including relevant medical information where required).
- It is very important that schools ensure travel application forms are signed by the parent/guardian and the student/s. Forms are not to be altered in any way. Incorporating a school logo onto the form is not approved.
- There are two main application forms;
  - Form 1: Application for Permission To Travel (Eligible and Exempt Student)
  - Form 2: Application for Permission to Travel (Fare Paying Students)
  - Additional forms (3 to 6) exist for travellers that may be granted exemption to travel, please refer to page 6 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#).
- Coordinating schools are responsible for coordinating and assessing all applications to travel on school bus services for students in their network (both government and non-government schools).

- Parents/guardians must be advised of the outcome of their application at the earliest possible convenience. Coordinating schools are responsible for notifying their own students' families and those of client schools. Coordinating schools are to notify client schools to enable appropriate records to be kept.

#### Administration

- If a student changes residential address at any time throughout the school year, they are required to submit a new application for reassessment. This requirement ensures that the application is assessed, and approved prior to any travel; ensuring the applicant is informed of bus seat availability, travel conditions and service timetables.
- Applications for Permission to Travel must be kept on file by the coordinating school until the student ceases travel or leaves the school.
- Coordinating schools are responsible for appointing bus captains. The roles and responsibilities of the bus captains are contained in [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#). Regular meetings should be scheduled between the coordinating principal and bus captains.
- Coordinating schools collate, maintain and provide to bus operators (who will provide to bus drivers):
  - route maps
  - timetables and authorised bus stops
  - route and passenger details by way of a roll/database of approved passengers to travel including students residential addresses
  - seat allocations (if required)
  - emergency management procedures
  - standards of behaviours
  - emergency contact information for each passenger
  - medical information for each passenger (as required)
  - the name of the bus captain
  - any changes to school timetables that may affect bus operation.
- Coordinating schools must provide to parents/guardians:
  - conditions of travel
  - bus timetables with all scheduled departure times for route
  - procedures to be adopted in the event of breakdown, accident, bushfire or other emergency.
- In the event of a 'pupil-free' or 'curriculum day' at a coordinating school, it must be ascertained as to whether 50% or more of the government school students (from client schools) who access the service still require transport. If they do, and the bus service is to run, an agreement needs to be made with a client school to act in the coordinating role for that day.
- If a coordinating school decides that the School Bus Program will not operate that day, client schools with students requiring transport can make their own arrangements or view the PTV journey planner at [ptv.vic.gov.au](http://ptv.vic.gov.au) for alternative transport options.



- Schools are responsible for supervising students during arrival and departure of school buses. Where possible bus set down and pick up areas should be 'out of bounds' for non-school bus users. Failure to provide supervision may result in service removals.

#### Communication

- Coordinating schools must ensure that coordinating schools and client school/s principals' phone numbers are provided to bus operators and drivers for both during and after school hours.
- Ensure that you have the contact details for bus operators (depots) and bus drivers servicing your networks. If a school does not have accurate information, please contact PTV or your bus operators immediately.
- The coordinating principal must provide the following to client schools principals;
  - Bus rolls
  - Route maps & timetables
  - Bus related or traffic procedures
  - Conditions of travel
  - Emergency contact details of each student who travels on a school bus.
- Ensure all contact details for travellers/families/parents/guardians are kept up-to-date and easily accessible during and outside of school hours. This information may be called upon for emergency management purposes.

#### Student Behaviour

- The coordinating principal is responsible for communication of acceptable standards of behaviour to students and has the authority to take disciplinary measures for misbehaviour. Please refer to page 20 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) for further information.

#### Risk Management/ Incident Reporting

- A duty of care is owed to all stakeholders (Students, Parents/Guardians, Bus Operators/Drivers, Schools etc.) incorporated within the remit of the School Bus Program.
- Coordinating schools are primarily responsible for coordinating emergency procedures for the School Bus Program services in their network.
- Coordinating schools are responsible for responding to any risk raised by the bus operator/driver and any other party.
- Where risk is identified, coordinating schools must refer to the [DET Risk Management Framework](#) for information and risk management guidance.

- Please refer to page 18 of the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) for Emergency Management information and responsibilities and page 20 for risk management and incident reporting.
- There is a specifically developed '[School Bus Program Emergency Management Operational Guidelines](#)' that should also be consulted in preparing for and responding to emergencies.
- Coordinating schools are responsible for all student related incidents occurring within the School Bus Network. Incidents on school buses are to be recorded in an incident register and managed by schools (not PTV or bus operators).
- It is of key importance that the incident is documented, investigated and adequate responses provided to all parties. This may include meeting with stakeholders as needed.
- Bus operators and drivers who have reported an incident should be informed of the schools investigation outcome. Ensuring the bus operator/driver is informed is a key to success in providing a cohesive school/transport provider relationship.
- Failure to provide information to bus operators/drivers may lead to further student non-compliance and or an operator/driver refusing to carry the student on grounds of safety. If this occurs, schools should inform STU or PTV and seek assistance to resolve the matter.
- Importantly, specific details of investigations and findings do not have to be provided to bus operators/drivers; an outcome of investigation is sufficient.
- Schools must ensure records are kept as they may be called upon for dispute resolution if the matter is escalated.

#### Authorising bus operator payments

- Coordinating schools approve bus operator payment claims. In line with the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) (page 24), coordinating schools must check all details including student numbers, days operated, vehicle and driver details and endorse the claim for payment.
- Endorsement or rejection must be provided within 2 days of each claim being submitted. Coordinating schools must retain copies of claims. The bus operator will then forward the endorsed claim to PTV for payment.
- Failure of schools to process this operator payment claim may lead to non-payment and possible service withdrawal.

### Anticipated Loadings

- Coordinating schools must submit anticipated loading data for their network to PTV by 31 October each year. This enables bus routes to be confirmed in time for the new school year and allows for appropriate notification to parents/guardians. Refer to page 19 [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) for further information on requirements.
- PTV will distribute the data collection spread sheet to be completed.
- Schools that fail to submit an accurately completed spread sheet on time may be placed on the PTV school bus network review list – finalised January each year.
- From 2014, DET introduced school bus policy compliance reviews. Schools that are placed on the PTV school bus network review list for failing to submit the anticipated loadings may be reviewed initially by the Student Transport Unit.

## Client School Responsibilities

### Applications

- All schools are responsible for communicating the travel options that exist in the area to parents upon enquiry at school or at enrolment. Schools must familiarise themselves with the [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#) in order to respond to enquiries made by parents about the program.
- When families enquire about transport options, schools should provide the [School Bus Program Eligibility Guide for Families](#) and/or direct them to the ['Travelling to School'](#) page on the Department's website.
- All schools accessing the School Bus Program are responsible for providing eligibility information to their families regarding the School Bus Program (including distributing the appropriate DET application form) and ensuring that when these are returned, all fields are completed (including relevant medical information where required).
- It is very important that schools ensure travel application forms are signed by the parent/guardian and the student/s. Forms are not to be altered in any way. Incorporating a school logo onto the form is not approved.
- There are two main application forms:
  - Form 1: Application for Permission to Travel (Eligible and Exempt Student)
  - Form 2: Application for Permission to Travel (Fare paying Student)
  - Additional forms (3 – 6) exist for travellers that may be granted exemption to travel, please refer to page 6 [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#)
- If you are unsure of which form to use, please refer to your coordinating school for clarification.
- Client schools will forward new applications to coordinating schools by the end of term three of the year prior to travel (where possible) and within a timely fashion for new students
- Parents/Guardians must be advised of the outcome of their applications at the earliest possible convenience.

### Administration

- If a student changes residential address at any time throughout the school year, they are required to submit a new application for reassessment. This requirement ensures that the application is assessed, and approved prior to any travel; ensuring the applicant is informed of bus seat availability, travel conditions and service timetables.

- Schools are responsible for supervising students during arrival and departure of school buses. Where possible bus set down and pick up areas should be 'out of bounds' for non-school bus users. Failure to provide supervision may result in service removals.

#### Communication

- Ensure both your during, and after hours contact details, are provided to your coordinating school and to the bus operators/drivers servicing your school.
- Ensure you have the, during and after hours, contact details for the coordinating school/principal.
- Ensure you have (from the coordinating school) the relevant information for your school;
  - Bus rolls
  - Route maps & timetables
  - Bus related or traffic procedures
  - Conditions of travel
  - Emergency contact details of each student who travels on a school bus.
- Ensure that you have the contact details for bus operators (depots) and bus drivers servicing your school. If a school does not have accurate information, please contact PTV or your bus operator immediately.
- Ensure the client school/s principals' phone numbers for both during and after school hours are provided to coordinating school, bus operators and drivers.
- Ensure all contact details for travellers/families/parents/guardians are kept up-to-date and easily accessible during and outside of school hours. This information may be called upon for emergency management purposes.

#### Anticipated Loadings

- Client schools must submit anticipated loading data for their school to the coordinating school by the end of term 3. This enables coordinating schools to meet their loading notifications to PTV and allows for appropriate notification to parents/guardians to occur in a timely manner. Please refer to page 24 [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) for further information.

## Parent/Guardian and Student Responsibilities

The Department understands that in the administration of school bus services, parents/guardians may be informed their children are not eligible to travel, may have to pay a fare and or may be waitlisted.

Ensuring parents/guardians are provided accurate information and advice is a fundamental key to success in administering the School Bus Program.

It is vital that both coordinating and client schools are consistent in their application of the policy and ensure their advice to parents is in line with the policy.

Parents/Guardians must;

- Complete the appropriate form to travel dependent on eligibility; ensuring all sections are completed and the form is signed by parent/guardian and student/s. Forms that are not signed will not be processed.
- Provide all required information to the school (including relevant medical information as required).
- Understand and accept the conditions of travel (attached to application form).
- Pay relevant fare (if required as a fare paying traveller) as invoiced by school.
- Complete form 5a: *Written undertaking of alternative arrangements for exempt students* (required for exempt and ineligible travellers).
- Ensure students are at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to allocated departure time. Note that bus drivers do not need to wait for late passengers unless prior notification is received.
- Ensure student behaviour at the bus stop and whilst travelling on the bus is appropriate at all times. (Refer to the 'Conditions of Travel' attached to the application form/provided to parents at the time of offer of travel, for complete conditions and responsibilities).
- Ensure contact information for the parent/guardian/alternate contact is kept up-to-date with their school (imperative for emergency management and student safety).
- School Bus Coordinators must provide parents/guardians with ;
  - The conditions of travel (attached to applications)
  - Bus timetables with all scheduled departure times for route
  - Procedures to be adopted in the event of breakdown, accident, bushfire or other emergency

## Bus Operator/Driver Responsibilities

Bus operators are required to provide services in line with appropriate legislation, the school bus contract (held directly with PTV) and the School Bus Program Policy and Procedures.

Bus drivers have a role in the safety and supervision of students while on board school buses and will rely on the information provided by the school. The relationship between the bus operator, driver and school is a key to success in delivery of safe and effective student transport services.

Please refer to, and familiarise yourselves with, the complete policy in regards to bus operator and driver responsibilities. (Page 26 [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; January 2016](#) )

- Bus drivers must use the school supplied, approved student bus rolls to administer approved student pickups and set downs and to ensure the delivery of on time services.
- Bus operators and drivers must ensure they have the coordinating school and client school/s Principals' contact numbers for both during and after school hours. Where possible, detours or delays should be reported immediately by phone to the coordinating principal.
- Bus operators must ensure they have supplied the appropriate current contact details for the depot and the bus driver to coordinating and client schools.
- Bus drivers must inform coordinating schools/principals in writing, of any instances of student misbehaviour, unauthorised passengers, loading issues and any issues that may affect ongoing operation as they arise).
  - Schools are responsible for following all reports and providing feedback to the operator/driver. When possible this should be documented to ensure all matters are addressed.
  - Should this prove to be difficult at the school level you are encouraged to seek assistance from the Student Transport Unit.
- It is of vital importance for drivers to adhere to the agreed and approved bus route for emergency management purposes, even when a student may not be travelling (therefore no pick up/set down for that day).
- It is imperative to know where the bus should be in the event of an emergency or breakdown.
  - Schools in conjunction with Bus operators must ensure timetables, maps and bus stop information is reviewed frequently and is accurate at all times.
- Drivers should complete a full visual inspection of the bus:
  - prior to departing school at completion of the morning service and
  - prior to garaging the bus at completion of the afternoon service.

## 4. Emergency Management

Everyone is responsible for emergency management: the Department, PTV, coordinating schools, client schools and bus operators. Parents and students also need to understand their obligations.

As part of your schools emergency planning each school must develop an emergency management plan incorporating bus operations and student transport that includes emergency procedures in the event of a breakdown, accident, bushfire and other emergency situations.

- All emergency management plans must be consistent with the plans of bus operators providing services in a local network.
- Emergency procedures for student transport must be established in consultation with bus operators and endorsed by the DET regional office.
- Emergency management plans must address: local risk to transport routes, alternative drop off points, student bus rolls, out of hours and emergency contact details for coordinating principals and/or delegates and bus operators and bus drivers.
- Liaison between coordinating schools, client schools, The Country Fire Authority (CFA), Victoria Police, Vic Roads and other emergency services may also be considered where appropriate and as required.
- Coordinating schools are primarily responsible for coordinating emergency procedures for the School Bus Program services in their network.
  - Bus operators/drivers are not responsible for developing these plans. The bus operator/driver will work with you at the school to ensure the plans reflect the bus operations.

The DET regional director is ultimately responsible for all emergency management decisions relating to schools (and transport) within their region.

In addition, DET Emergency Management Division (EMD), the STU and PTV have developed specific emergency management procedures to be used for the School Bus Program.

It is important that all groups involved in the administration of the School Bus Program familiarise themselves with these procedures and follow them in the event of an emergency. The Student Transport Emergency Management Procedures document is available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport)

### **Do schools need to have a separate emergency plan for school buses?**

No. If the overall emergency management plan in place for the school adequately covers transport and school buses, then there is no need to have a separate plan.

Coordinating schools should ensure that their overall plan covers client schools in relation to the School Bus Program and that the bus operator/driver is aware and provided a copy of the emergency management plan related to the bus service network.



## 5. Bus Roll Template

Through the DET Policy Compliance reviews and the PTV School Bus Network reviews, the STU has identified that no singular 'system' has been implemented to capture accurate School Bus Program information across all networks.

To address this, the Department commenced the School Bus Program Administrative Reform work with PTV. Further information about this program is available on the DET Student Transport website.

As school bus networks move towards the PTV administrative system, schools must ensure they have all required data captured to:

- be meeting all requirements within the School Bus Program Policy and
- be 'data' ready for the transitional stage to the PTV system (dates to be confirmed – noting the trial is to run well into 2016).

STU have developed an easy to use excel spread sheet to capture the required data and to assist schools to keep accurate records. A blank template is available on the DET Student Transport [website](#). The template does require basic excel knowledge and schools are encouraged to seek training if needed.

The template is not 'locked' so it can be altered locally to add school specific information and additional tabs, rows and columns as needed.

- Please refer to the template for basic instructions.
- The template does not contain formulas.

STU actively seeks your feedback on how we can improve the template whilst keeping it easy to use and limit the administration once set up.

As it is an excel spread sheet, STU encourages bus coordinators to keep a regular back up of the template (with data) to ensure if any errors are made or data is lost you can revert to an earlier version.

### ATTENTION:

Schools that are using the 'On the Buses' Access Database previously provided by Department of Transport Regional teams are advised to transfer data to the new template and cease using the database as it is not supported by DET.

DET cannot be responsible for its accuracy if called upon for emergency management.

## 6. Fares

Fare paying travellers must pay the appropriate term fare in advance of travel (page 11 – 13 [School Bus Program Policy and Procedures: January 2016](#))

Refer DET Student Transport [website](#) for current fare rates.

A fare paying student will retain access to a SBP service providing spare capacity is available. Once approved, the fare payer (provided they continue to pay in advance of travel) will retain the right to travel.

Parents/guardians complete form 5a 'written undertakings of alternative arrangements for exempt students' agreeing that alternative transport arrangements will be made if capacity becomes insufficient.

Permission to access a school bus service and addition to the bus roll is not permissible until the correct fare has been paid. Permission to travel and payment is on a term-by-term basis.

Fares must not be adjusted to account for students travelling less than five days per week. The full term fare must be paid irrespective of the number of days a student travels.

### Administration and Collection

Coordinating schools will invoice parent/guardians/traveller (tax invoices are not required) in advance, to allow suitable time for payment before the start of term.

It is the responsibility of each school to collect fares on behalf of their students.

Coordinating schools will collect fares from their students and members of the public.

Client schools will collect fares and forward to their coordinating school.

Schools are to record received travel fares in CASES 21 using general ledger code 74403 – Charities and Collections with GST type NS6.

Coordinating schools will forward payment to the Student Transport Unit.

The transaction is to be recorded in CASES 21 using general ledger code 89102 – Charities and Collections with GST type NP6.

Submit a cheque each term to the Student Transport Unit.

Make the cheque payable to Department of Education & Training (DET) and clearly mark as 'School Bus Fares'.

Please complete the [fare remittance](#) located on the DET Student Transport website and send with the cheque.

Send to: 'Student Transport Unit (DET), GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001.

Please also e-mail the remittance in soft copy to [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## 7. Coordinator Checklist.

Page # in the User Guide /Policy /Link	Question	Completed							
		Y	N						
Pages 2 to 5 — Policy	Have I provided the correct information to the parent/guardian? (Quick assessment against the criteria)								
Page 4 & 5 – User Guide	Have I provided the correct form to the parent/guardian?								
Page 6 (coordinating school) – User Guide	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Eligible;</th> <th>Exempt;</th> <th>Ineligible;</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Traveller meets all criteria.</td> <td>Traveller qualifies for an exemption to access the School Bus Program for free.  If you are unsure please refer to your coordinating school for clarification.</td> <td>Traveller does not meet eligibility for free travel on the School Bus Program, but would like to access as a fare payer</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Eligible;	Exempt;	Ineligible;	Traveller meets all criteria.	Traveller qualifies for an exemption to access the School Bus Program for free.  If you are unsure please refer to your coordinating school for clarification.	Traveller does not meet eligibility for free travel on the School Bus Program, but would like to access as a fare payer		
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Page 9 (client school) – User Guide	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Correct form;</th> <th>Correct Form;</th> <th>Correct Form;</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Form 1: ‘Application for permission to travel – Eligible and Exempt Students’</td> <td>Form 1: ‘Application for permission to travel – Eligible and Exempt Students’</td> <td>Form 2: ‘Application for permission to travel – Fare Paying Students’</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Correct form;	Correct Form;	Correct Form;	Form 1: ‘Application for permission to travel – Eligible and Exempt Students’	Form 1: ‘Application for permission to travel – Eligible and Exempt Students’	Form 2: ‘Application for permission to travel – Fare Paying Students’		
Correct form;	Correct Form;	Correct Form;							
Form 1: ‘Application for permission to travel – Eligible and Exempt Students’	Form 1: ‘Application for permission to travel – Eligible and Exempt Students’	Form 2: ‘Application for permission to travel – Fare Paying Students’							
<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/Schoolbus.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/Schoolbus.aspx</a>									
Page 10 – User Guide	Has the parent/guardian completed all of the required information and have they and the student/s signed the form?  <b>If not completed – DO not allow travel.</b>								
Page 9 – User Guide	If I am a client school have I forwarded all applications to coordinating school for assessment?								
Page 6 – User Guide	Coordinating school assess the application.  Seek assistance from STU as required.								
Page 6 – User Guide	Coordinating school to notify parents/guardians (in writing – email is ok) of the outcome in a timely fashion. (Both students of coordinating schools and those of client schools.)  Notify (in writing – email is ok) client schools of outcomes for their records.								

Page # in the User Guide /Policy /Link	Question	Completed	
		Y	N
<p>Page 7 – User Guide</p> <p><a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/Schoolbus.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/Schoolbus.aspx</a></p>	<p>Once offer of travel made, have I (coordinating school);</p> <p><b>Eligible &amp; Exempt Travellers;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notified client school of students place on the bus?</li> <li>• Provided parents/guardians with all of the required information?</li> <li>✓ Conditions of travel</li> <li>✓ Bus timetable</li> <li>✓ Bus departure times for all stops &amp;</li> <li>✓ 'Procedures to be adopted in the event of breakdown, accident, bushfire or emergency'</li> </ul> <p><b>Ineligible (fare paying) Travellers;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invoiced parent/guardian/traveller</li> <li>• Provided 'Conditions of Travel'</li> <li>• Provided form 5a: 'Written undertakings of alternative travel arrangements'</li> </ul> <p>Once payment of fares has been made and the signed 'Written undertakings of alternative travel arrangements' has been returned, have I;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notified client school of students place on the bus?</li> <li>• Provided parents/guardians with all of the required information?</li> <li>✓ Bus timetable</li> <li>✓ Bus departure times for all stops &amp;</li> <li>✓ 'Procedures to be adopted in the event of breakdown, accident, bushfire or emergency'</li> </ul>		
<p><a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/Schoolbus.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/Pages/Schoolbus.aspx</a></p> <p>Page 20 - User Guide</p>	<p>Do I/ should I have collected fares from fare paying travellers?</p> <p>Have I;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Followed up with client schools for outstanding fares?</li> <li>• Received fares from client schools?</li> <li>• Recorded fares from travellers in CASES 21?</li> <li>• Completed the fare remittance advice form?</li> <li>• Processed payment for STU via CASES 21 and posted the cheque and remittance advice to STU?</li> <li>• Emailed a soft copy of the remittance advice to <a href="mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au">student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au</a></li> </ul>		

## 8. Frequently Asked Questions

### **Access to more than one bus service;**

From 2016, coordinating principals may approve students who reside at more than one address to access more than one service. The student must be assessed against all eligibility criteria from the primary address. If the student is eligible from the primary address, they may be permitted to access two bus services at no cost. (Please note this is a change to previous policies where only one 'no cost' service was able to be accessed).

A student meeting eligibility from the primary address, may still be able to access a service as an ineligible traveller. Either as a fare payer or an exempted traveller. (based on the exemptions as set out in the School Bus Program Policy and Procedures; November 2013)

If they access as a fare payer, the full term fare must be paid (Despite the seat being accessed less than five days).

### **If a traveller does not access a bus everyday do they still need to pay the full fare?**

Yes. Regardless of the days travelled, all fare paying travellers must pay the appropriate term fare. The school bus program is not public transport and does not cater for pro rata fares or daily rates of travel.

### **What if a school bus stops at my front gate but the bus to my closest school is further away? Can my child get the bus outside our gate?**

If the bus that stops at your front gate travels to a school other than the nearest, your child may be able to travel on it, subject to seating availability and upon payment of a fare.

If the bus service to your nearest government school is more than 4.8 km away from your home, then your child may seek an exemption to travel at no cost to your next nearest government school (This exemption is only available to government school students)

If access to public transport is less than 1.6 km away the public transport service must be utilised regardless of the location of the school bus service. This may cause some concern for families, however, we must understand that Public Transport must be utilised over the School Bus Program when possible.

## Approval Forms

### **What is each form for and why do I need it?**

Schools must use Department-formatted School Bus Program Application for Permission to Travel application forms. Using the correct forms creates consistency, fairness and ensures families are aware of their obligations under the program.

Please use the appropriate application form that corresponds to a student's eligibility status. Forms meet all requirements of the program, operationally and legally and schools must adhere to using the forms provided.

**Current and up-to-date forms are accessed via the website.**

- *Form 1: Application for Permission To Travel (Eligible and Exempt Student)*
  - Use this form for students meeting the criteria for free travel (as set out in the policy) or students meeting exemption criteria (as assessed by coordinating school principal against the policy)
  
- *Form 2: Application for Permission to Travel (Fare Paying Students)*
  - Use this form for students who do not meet the eligibility or exemption criteria for free travel and would like to access a fare paying seat on the School Bus Program
  
- *Form 3: Application for Permission to Travel (Post-Secondary and Apprentices)*
  - Use this form for the application and authorisation of post-secondary students and apprentices undertaking further education and training to access the School Bus Program. Please refer to page 6 of the policy for criteria and eligibility.
  
- *Form 4: Application for Permission to Travel (General Public)*
  - Use this form for application and authorisation of the general public to access the School Bus Program. Please refer to page 14 of the policy for criteria and eligibility.
  
- *Form 5a: Written Undertaking of Alternative Travel Arrangements for Exempt Students*
  - Use this form for travellers who are exempt (not eligible but accessing free travel as an exempt traveller) or ineligible travellers who are accessing the service as a paying traveller.
  - The form is signed by parents/guardians acknowledging that should travellers with a higher priority require the service, they are required to make other travel arrangements.
  - As categorised on page 7 (Exemptions from the eligibility criteria) of the [School Bus Policy](#), exempt or ineligible travellers requiring completion of this form are:
    - Students who reside less than 4.8km from the nearest school
    - Ineligible Travellers
    - Pre-school students
    - Students attending their next nearest government or non-government school
    - Students who live less than 4.8 from the nearest schools and attend an alternative school
    - Teachers
    - Post-secondary students and apprentices
    - General Public
    - Interstate Students

- *Form 5b: Written Undertakings for Teachers*
  - Use this form for the application and authorisation of teachers to access the School Bus Program. Please refer to page 10 of the policy for criteria and eligibility.
- *Form 6: Written Undertakings for Pre-School Students*
  - Use this form for the application and authorisation of pre-school students to access the School Bus Program. Please refer to page 7 of the policy for criteria and eligibility.
- *Form 7: Notice of Concern (Behaviour)*
  - This form is to be completed by the bus driver and the coordinating principal in the event of a student disobeying conditions of travel.
  - Please refer to the form for further information.
- *Form 8: Application for a New School Bus Service or Feeder Service*
  - Use this form for requesting a new service or a feeder service to link in with an existing service.
- *Form 9: Application for Extension of an Existing Route*
  - Use this form for requesting a change/extension to an existing service.
- *Form 10: Application for Adhoc Travel - Students*
  - Use this form for an existing approved traveller to access a different service from their regular service, on an adhoc basis.
  - Use this form for a student (not a regular traveller) who wishes to access a service on an adhoc basis.

## 9. Contacts

### **Department of Education and Training (DET)**

The Students Transport Unit sits within the Student Transport and Family Allowances Branch (STFAB), and is located at 33 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne 3002

GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001

Phone: (03) 9637 2200

Email: [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au)

School Website: [www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport)

Parent Website: [www.education.vic.gov.au/travellingtoschool](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/travellingtoschool)

Note: Student Transport prefers all emails to be sent directly to the [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au) address, this ensures that your enquiry is processed in a timely manner and is directed to the correct area. This will also enable Student Transport to track your email and ensure you are provided a prompt response and your enquiry is not overlooked.

### **Public Transport Victoria (PTV)**

Public Transport Victoria is located at 750 Collins Street, Docklands 3008

Phone: 1800 800 007

Email: [schoolbus@ptv.vic.gov.au](mailto:schoolbus@ptv.vic.gov.au)

### **Feedback**

This guide will be continually developed and updated on the Student Transport webpages. This guide will be enhanced following the feedback provided by School Bus Coordinators.

Student Transport encourages schools to provide feedback in relation to improving this guide directly to the Student Transport Unit email at: [student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.transport@edumail.vic.gov.au)





