# Travel Support to Specialist Schools – Information for Schools

## What travel support does the Department provide?

* A conveyance allowance
* Access to travel education program
* Assistance to access a mainstream bus (only in rural and regional Victoria)
* Department specialist school transport service
* Alternate Department-arranged transport solutions

## Who is eligible?

To be eligible for support of a conveyance allowance, school transport service or travel education support, a specialist school student must:

* Be approved under the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) or Disability Inclusion Tier 3 student-level funding.
* Be eligible for enrolment at the school they attend
* Reside within the Designated Transport Area (DTA) of the school they attend
* Be enrolled at the special school for three or more days per week (0.6 EFT)

## What is considered before transport support is provided?

Principals will consider the following factors when assessing the most appropriate travel support for each student:

* Can the student travel independently? Or,
* Could the student take part in a travel education program?
* What will the parent/guardian/carers contribute to the transport arrangements of the student?
* Is it possible for students to travel on existing mainstream school bus service (only in rural and regional Victoria)

## What is a Designated Transport Area (DTA)?

DTAs are prescribed areas that determine a student’s eligibility for travel support. Travel supports may be provided to a student whose primary place of residence is within the DTA of the school attended. Students residing outside of the DTA are welcome to enrol at any school; however, travel support will not be available to them.

## Conveyance Allowance – Who can apply?

A student who is eligible for travel support may be eligible for a conveyance allowance if:

* They meet the basic eligibility outlined on page 1
* The student’s parent/guardian/carers assume responsibility for private travel, or
* The student utilises public transport.

## How much conveyance allowance is provided?

The amount of financial support provided varies. Amounts are based on the one-way kilometre distance between residential address of the student and the school attended.

More detailed information regarding the Conveyance Allowance Program can be found at the link:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/conveyance-allowance/policy>

## Bus Travel – Who gets a bus?

Independent travel is not always possible for all students attending specialist schools.

* Eligible students who cannot independently get to school may receive travel support to access a transport service that the Department provides.
* These services cater for a large number of students with varying abilities and requirements.
* Parent/guardian/carers must be advised on enrolment that these services are designed to best service a collective group of students and as such, individual requests often cannot be accommodated in the interests of all student travellers.
* Parents are welcome at all times to take their child to school if the bus services do not suit their child or family arrangement.

## What happens at the start of each school year?

Transport reviews take place at the end of each year in preparation for the new school year.

* As the Department and schools adjust transport services to accommodate new students some changes to travel routes and timetables are usually unavoidable
* It should be expected that travel routes and times will change from time to time.

## Who is responsible for day-to-day issues?

Principals are responsible for discipline on Department school transport services.

Principals will inform all parents of travel behaviour requirements prior to the commencement of travel arrangements and ensure families have read and signed the application for transport assistance form which outlines the terms and conditions of travel. Principals will reinforce these in appropriate forums throughout the year.

Principals have authority to take disciplinary measures for misbehaviour, including temporary or permanent suspension from bus travel.

The Department requests that parent/guardian/carers and service providers immediately report any incident regarding travel concerns to the principal for investigation.

Transport service providers will also report any issues or incidents that occur during transit to/or from the school.

Service provider staff have the discretion to halt a service in the event of a significant emergency.

## Working with bus operators

The relationship a school has with each transport service provider is extremely important to ensure smooth running of services. It is expected that each school will have a documented Route approval with their service provider. Open and clear communication is essential to providing a successful service to students. Route approvals must be reviewed annually.

## Monitoring and evaluating services

The Department requires the cooperation of schools to evaluate existing transport services on a regular basis. It is important the school principal advises the Student Transport Unit (STU) when:

* Student travel times exceed policy limits
* Patronage on a service increases or declines
* There is insufficient wheelchair seating on a service
* Services are consistently late
* Complaints are made regarding the service provider or their staff

All changes to services require approval by the STU.

Please note that bus services are not readily available, and the Student Transport Unit must adhere to the Department’s Procurement Policy when a new service is required. This process can take several months. Where seating is not available immediately, eligible families may be offered a conveyance allowance to assist with the private transport of the student to school.

## Further information

Further information can be found via the link:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/transport-students-disabilities/policy>