Mid North Education Centre

Making a difference by engaging and empowering

Transport Assistance Program

Information for Parents and Carers

The Department for Education Transport Assistance Program (TAP) supports eligible children and young people with disability to travel to and from their closest or most appropriate government specialised education option.

Transport assistance supports access to school, but it does not replace the parent or carer's responsibility to ensure their child attends school.

Eligibility

A child or young person may be eligible for transport assistance if they:

- are enrolled in a government specialised education option that is not located at their local school
- live 5 kilometres or more from the specialised education option
- have an active National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan

In extraordinary circumstances, an out-of-policy agreement may be considered by the department.

Types of Transport Assistance

Financial Assistance

Eligible families may receive:

- a daily car allowance for travel between home and school
- reimbursement of eligible private bus fares in regional areas
- an annual passenger transport grant for public transport

Direct Assistance

Direct assistance may include a:

- taxi
- contracted bus
- access vehicle

Direct assistance is provided for travel between the student's residence or approved pick-up point and their specialised education option.

A maximum of 2 approved addresses generally applies unless there are extenuating circumstances.

The department will determine the most appropriate form of assistance based on eligibility, direct assistance conditions and provider availability.

NDIS requirements

The department is an in-kind provider for school transport under the NDIS.

To access TAP, children and young people must meet the NDIS reasonable and necessary criteria for transport and have an active NDIS plan.

Families are encouraged to discuss school transport support with their child's NDIS planner and ensure NDIS plans are renewed in a timely way to avoid disruption to assistance.

Mid North Education Centre

Making a difference by engaging and empowering

How to apply

If your child appears eligible, the school can assist you to complete the relevant department application process.

Applications are made using the **ED039A Transport Assistance application** and must include the required supporting documentation, including NDIS information.

Direct Assistance Conditions

Direct assistance will only be considered where:

- the student is over 6 years of age
- the student can travel safely without adult supervision
- there are 2 or more students travelling together on the run
- the journey is less than 1 hour
- a suitable transport provider is available

The department cannot guarantee direct assistance for every application. If direct assistance cannot be provided, financial assistance may be offered instead.

Safe Travel

Before direct assistance is approved, the school must consider the student's medical and behaviour support needs to determine whether the student can travel safely.

Families should advise the school as soon as possible if there is any change in their child's:

- health
- behaviour
- communication
- supervision needs
- support requirements

Where behaviour creates a risk to the student, other passengers, the driver or other road users, the school will work with the family, the Transport Assistance Program and the transport provider to identify appropriate strategies.

Direct assistance may be suspended or changed where safe travel cannot be maintained.

If a student requires a registered nurse, enrolled nurse or health support officer to support complex health care needs during transport, this must be managed through the appropriate department pathway.

Mid North Education Centre

Making a difference by engaging and empowering

Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Parents and carers accessing direct assistance are required to:

- ensure the school has current contact details
- notify the transport provider as soon as possible if their child will be absent
- have their child ready for collection at the scheduled time
- ensure a responsible adult is present at the approved drop-off location
- support their child into and out of the vehicle where required
- ensure their child is appropriately restrained where required
- safely manage and collect the student's school bag and personal items
- advise the school of concerns relating to transport arrangements
- avoid making private arrangements with drivers for changes to approved pick-up or drop-off locations

Direct assistance relies on regular and consistent arrangements. Unscheduled changes are not permitted.

Child Safety Seats and Restraints

Where a child safety seat or booster is required:

- it must comply with AS/NZS 1754
- it must be installed by the parent or carer in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- it must be less than 10 years old
- it must be in good condition and checked regularly

Child restraint accessories or non-standard safety devices that are not certified under AS/NZS 1754 are not permitted. This includes items such as:

- buckle guards or buckle covers
- Houdini straps or Houdini stops
- harnesses or other non-standard restraint accessories

Changes to Transport Arrangements

Transport arrangements must be regular and consistent.

Unscheduled changes are not permitted.

A temporary change generally requires an **ED039B application** and is usually approved for no longer than 2 weeks.

If a longer-term or permanent change is required, families should contact the school so the appropriate department application can be completed.

Emergency changes also require the department's temporary change process and contact with the Transport Assistance Program.

If Your Child is Unwell at School

Direct assistance is only provided for travel to and from school at the beginning and end of the school day.

If a student becomes unwell during the school day, the parent or carer is responsible for collecting the student from school.

Mid North Education Centre

Making a difference by engaging and empowering

Incidents or Medical Emergencies During Transport

If a medical emergency occurs during transport, the driver will stop when safe to do so and contact emergency services.

The school will be notified and will contact the parent or carer. Relevant incidents will be managed and reported in accordance with department requirements.

If a vehicle is involved in an accident, incident or breakdown, the driver will remain with the students and the transport provider will contact the school and relevant department transport services.

Emergency Management

Mid North Education Centre's emergency management arrangements include procedures for students using Transport Assistance.

Transport may be changed or cancelled where an emergency, bushfire, catastrophic fire danger, flooding or another safety risk affects travel.

Families and transport providers will be informed as soon as possible where arrangements are affected.

Annual Review

Transport arrangements are reviewed at the end of each school year.

Where a student may otherwise be travelling alone, where the existing transport run cannot continue, or where a provider is unavailable, direct assistance may cease and an out-of-policy agreement or financial assistance may be considered.

Concerns or Feedback

Parents and carers should contact Mid North Education Centre regarding concerns about their child's transport arrangements.

Mid North Education Centre
Phone: (08) 8632 1091
For formal feedback or complaints, families may also use the Department for Education feedback and complaints process.

Related Information

- Department for Education Children and young people with disability – transport assistance program procedure
- ED039A Transport Assistance application
- ED039B Temporary change to transport arrangements
- Department for Education feedback and complaints process