



School Transport Roles and Responsibilities Guide for Directly Resourced schools

Te Puna Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital
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1. Overview

Purpose and scope

This document outlines roles and responsibilities for the administration and delivery of Directly Resourced (DR) services. It also contains general information on accessing Conveyance Allowance in cases where eligible students cannot access DR services/funding.

Background

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has been managing the transport of students to and from school for over 130 years. While caregivers are ultimately responsible for transporting their children to and from school, the Ministry offers assistance to students who do not have access to public transport, or where distance, mobility or other issues create barriers to accessing an appropriate learning environment.

The Ministry assists over 100,000 students to get to and from school safely each school day and oversees around 40 million passenger journeys every year.

Services

The Ministry delivers school transport assistance through the following services (covered in this document):

Directly Resourced (DR)	Bulk funding provided directly to schools to provide transport assistance for their students within defined parameters.
Conveyance Allowance	Payments made by the Ministry directly to caregivers to contribute towards the cost of transportation. A conveyance allowance is only paid to eligible students who live more than 2.4km from a Ministry-funded bus route. For schools in a DR funding arrangement, eligible students may only receive a Conveyance Allowance if they live more than 2.4 km from the Ministry designed DR route, regardless of whether the school runs the route as designed.

The Ministry also delivers transport assistance through the following services and funding mechanisms (not covered in this document):

Daily Bus	Transport assistance between schools and designated bus stops within a defined proximity to students' homes.
Technology Bus	Transport assistance between schools to enable Year 7 and 8 students to access technical education facilities.
Specialised School Transport Assistance (SESTA)	Transport assistance for children and young people with safety and/or mobility needs that prevent them from travelling independently to and from the nearest appropriate school.
Māori Medium Schools (MMS)	Bulk funding provided directly to Kura, Kura Kaupapa Māori and designated character Wharekura as designated under sections 204 and 205 for the Education and Training Act 2020 to provide transport assistance for their students within defined parameters.

Please refer to the Ministry of Education [website](#) for up-to-date information on Daily Bus, Technology Bus, MMS, and SESTA.

Eligibility criteria – DR School

Students attending DR schools must meet the three following criteria to be eligible for School Transport Assistance:

1. The school must be the **closest state or state-integrated school where the student can enrol.**
2. Students must live more than a certain distance¹ from school, depending on their year level:
 - **Years 1-8:** at least **3.2 kilometres** from the school
 - **Years 9-13:** at least **4.8 kilometres** from the school
3. There must be **no suitable public transport options available.**

Suitable public transport

For the purposes of eligibility assessment for DR, suitable public transport is defined by timeliness and accessibility. In practice, this means any public transport option that:

- travels within 2.4 km of the student's home
- travels within 2.4 km of the school
- does not require the student to change services more than once
- departs after 7am and arrives before school starts
- leaves no later than one hour after school finishes (including after-school activities).

More information on eligibility criteria is available on the Ministry's [website](#).

¹ Distances are measured by the shortest public road or pedestrian route from the home roadside gate to the school's front gate.

Responsibilities at a glance

Responsibility	Ministry	DR schools*	Caregivers
Policy	✓		
Funding agreement preparation and management	✓		
Designing DR routes to determine funding payments	✓		
Making DR funding payments to schools	✓		
Eligibility assessment and advice	✓	✓	
Service design, validation, and review		✓	
Contracts for service and contract variations		✓	
Safe siting of bus stops or pick-up/drop-off (PUDO) points		✓	
Communication with caregivers and students		✓	
Ensuring students get safely to and from PUDO points			✓
Addressing student behaviour issues		✓	✓
Health and safety	✓	✓	✓
Emergency and incident management		✓	
Auditing and monitoring supplier performance		✓	

* While DR schools can contract a transport service provider to deliver transport services, they cannot contract out of its health and safety PCBU obligations

All groups involved in the provision and management of school transport services have responsibilities and obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and it is each party's responsibility to understand and act on these obligations while taking all practicable and reasonable steps to mitigate risks to health and safety.

2. Ministry

Overview

To deliver on its school transport assistance mandate, the Ministry has a School Transport business unit. School Transport sits within the Te Puna Hanganga, Matihiko – Infrastructure & Digital (TPHM) group of the Ministry.

Key responsibilities of the Ministry's School Transport business unit with respect to DR funding include:

- managing funding agreements with schools
- designing optimal routes for eligible students to determine funding payments
- making payments to schools
- processing Conveyance Allowance applications for assistance
- making Conveyance Allowance payments to caregivers.

Key roles

The following Ministry roles are involved in the administration and delivery of school transport funding and services:

Role	Responsibilities	Key relationships
Regional Transport Advisor (RTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designing optimised “funded routes” for eligible students within current policy parameters, used to inform the funding payment to DR schools• Undertake DR funding reviews as part of a periodic review or when requested by schools due to a significant change in the number of eligible students²• Engage with schools regarding proposed routes, and route and funding changes• Assess the suitability of public transport options• Provide advice on Ministry School Transport Assistance policy, optimal route design, and delivery models	DR schools
Transport Contract Manager (TCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor legislative and contractual compliance and safety• Ensure that schools are complying with their funding agreement• Provide assistance and guidance regarding the school's obligations	DR schools

² A request for a funding review can only be made once in any 24-month period provided that at least six months has passed since the last Ministry funding review

Transport Coordinators and Transport Officers (TCOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and process Conveyance Allowance applications for DR schools • Process and quality-check payments to schools and caregivers • Respond to customer enquiries 	DR schools, parents and caregivers
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DR route design and changes to routes

To determine the level of DR funding the Ministry designs routes based on school transport route design criteria (**Ministry Designed Routes**). The DR school/network may choose to run alternative routes to the Ministry Designed Routes so long as the DR school/network complies with its funding agreement with the Ministry.

Please note that when assessing eligibility for a Conveyance Allowance payment, the Ministry will measure the distance from the student's home address³ to the Ministry Designed Route, regardless of whether the school runs the route as designed. Where a school is choosing not to run the route as designed, the school is responsible for paying a transport allowance to all students that are bypassed by the revised route.

In designing Ministry Designed Routes, the Ministry considers:

- the location of eligible students
- the location of pick up/drop off (PUDO) points
- health and safety requirements

The Ministry finalises Ministry Designed Routes after discussion between the RTA and DR networks/schools.

The Ministry can undertake a review of Ministry Designed Routes at any time.

Schools may request the Ministry undertakes a review of Ministry Designed Route once in any 24-month period if:

- there is a significant change in Eligible Students; and
- it has been at least six months since the last funding review by the Ministry.

Eligibility assessment and policy advice

The RTA in each region will assess applications for DR funded route amendments. The RTA can also provide advice to schools on eligibility, policy, optimal route design, and delivery models. The Ministry assesses applications for School Transport Assistance against a range of criteria (see Overview for eligibility criteria).

Safety and compliance

The TCMs are regionally based staff responsible for ensuring that the schools deliver on their safety and legislative obligations. They provide guidance and assistance in this area and will proactively engage with schools to ensure they meet their obligations as a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) as defined by Worksafe and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

³ Distances are measured by the shortest public road or pedestrian route from the home roadside gate to the Ministry Designed Route.

3. Schools

Overview

DR Schools are funded to provide transport assistance to eligible students. How they provide that assistance is at the discretion of the school or network receiving the funding. Assistance can be through a place on a vehicle provided by a transport service provider/school, or by financial assistance provided direct to caregivers.

The schools also act as the first point of contact for caregivers and students for School Transport Assistance, eligibility, applications, safety and other enquiries. Schools are responsible for assessing student eligibility, coordinating and creating documented procedures for vehicle loading and unloading and maintaining regular communication with all other parties.

All schools receiving funding for transport assistance are responsible for:

- complying with the funding agreement with the Ministry
- ensuring services are safe
- ensuring all eligible students at their schools receive transport assistance
- procuring and managing contracts required for the provision of transport services
- providing access and information for auditing and compliance checks by the Ministry
- reporting all incidents, accidents, and emergencies to the Ministry
- advising caregivers and students of the School Transport Assistance eligibility criteria and communicating other relevant information as required
- submitting Conveyance Allowance applications to the Ministry
- maintaining accurate and up-to-date lists of eligible students
- providing student data to School Transport upon request
- promoting safe behaviour and working with Transport Service Providers (TSPs) and drivers to address student behaviour issues as needed
- ensuring processes are in place for safe loading and unloading of students and ensuring that school PUDOs are clear and accessible
- advising caregivers of any changes to the assistance provided

This is a reference guide only, and schools/networks should refer to their funding agreement in the first instance for a complete and accurate account of their responsibilities and obligations.

Key responsibilities

Schools have responsibilities for the coordination and delivery of school transport assistance, summarised as follows:

Type	Responsibilities
Procurer/provider of transport services	<p>Where a school arranges the provision of school transport services they are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure everything reasonably practicable is being done to ensure the services are operated safely• notify all relevant parties in the event of an incident or emergency• prepare incident reports and submit to the Ministry as required• report to the Ministry on the services provided• if services are outsourced:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Run a contestable process when procuring services○ Supply an after-hours contact phone number to the transport provider
Engagement with caregivers and students	<p>Schools maintain the relationship with caregivers/whanau and students. When providing school transport assistance schools must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• act as the first point of contact for caregivers/whanau and students for all school transport enquiries, including eligibility• assess student eligibility using Ministry criteria• maintain accurate, up-to-date lists of eligible students• supervise transport loading and unloading and create a documented procedure for loading and unloading• inform caregivers/whanau of changes to transport assistance, including changes to timetables, routes and stops• clearly communicate expectations for appropriate behaviour on school transport services to caregivers and students.

Appointing a Bus Controller

Each school served by Ministry-funded bus routes must appoint a Bus Controller to serve as a single point of contact on school transport issues. The Bus Controller must take responsibility for all relevant tasks above. More information on the duties of a Bus Controller is available on the Ministry's [website](#).

Receiving the Bus Controller Allowance

Teaching staff with Bus Controller duties may be able to claim the Bus Controller Allowance. Teachers and principals covered by the following employment agreements may be eligible for the allowance:

- Primary Teachers' Collective Agreement
- Primary Principals' Collective Agreement
- Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement
- Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement.

More information on how to claim the Bus Controller Allowance, including detailed eligibility criteria, is available on the Ministry's [website](#).

Providing safe services

Through assuming the responsibility to provide transport assistance to students, schools also take on the responsibility to ensure any assistance they are involved in providing is safe. DR schools must have robust health and safety plans in place and must demonstrate clear and appropriate systems and standards for mitigating risks to health and safety.

Appropriate safety planning includes ensuring that transport services provided use safe PUDO locations along the route and ensuring that these locations are fit for purpose. In deciding on the location of PUDO points, transport providers and schools should refer to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's Guidelines for Safe Siting of School Bus Stops: nzta.govt.nz/resources/siting-school-bus-stops. Schools and transport providers should also establish appropriate procedures for vehicle stopping and unloading.

Procuring services

Where a school outsources the provision of any part of the school transport services they provide, they are required by the funding agreement to carry out the procurement of the services in accordance with the following criteria:

- The process must be contestable and transparent
- If the total budget exceeds \$100,000 it must be advertised on GETS
- Any conflicts of interest must be managed.

Useful information to comply with these criteria can be found here:

- *Financial Information for Schools Handbook*: <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Financial-Information-for-Schools-Handbook-2019.pdf>
- *Procurement Guidance for Public Entities*: <http://www.oag.govt.nz/2008/procurement-guide/>.
- *Government Procurement Rules*: <https://www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-procurement-rules/getting-started/>

Providing eligibility advice

Schools should be familiar with the eligibility criteria for School Transport Assistance and prepared to answer enquiries from caregivers/whanau and students regarding eligibility. Refer to the Ministry's website for up-to-date information on eligibility for School Transport Assistance: www.education.govt.nz/transport.

In most cases, schools will be able to determine eligibility for School Transport Assistance without input from the Ministry. In particularly complex cases, schools should seek the Ministry's advice by contacting the RTA for their region.

Services for eligible students

Schools who accept DR funding are responsible for delivering safe and reliable services or a transport allowance for all eligible students. When services are provided, they must be delivered in line with appropriate legislation and the funding agreement with the Ministry.

If the assistance is provided by way of a place on a vehicle, then no eligible student is to be charged for that transport.

Services for ineligible students

Schools may arrange the delivery of School Transport Assistance to ineligible students, using the funding, provided that:

- No student is required to stand
- Such assistance does not disadvantage eligible students
- All DR students reside within the School or Networks Transport Eligibility Zone (*the scheme that allowed students to cross TEZs and receive transport prior to 31 December 2020 has been grandfathered*)

Schools may charge ineligible students a fare.

Maintaining lists of eligible students

All schools receiving DR funding are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date lists of all students receiving School Transport Assistance at their school and for providing student data to the Ministry when requested. Schools should also inform the RTA of changes to their student cohort that will impact on the funding they receive.

DR Schools Providing and submitting Conveyance Allowance application forms

Eligible DR students can receive a Conveyance Allowance (paid by the Ministry to the caregiver) if they reside more than 2.4 km⁴ from the Ministry Designed Routes. The payment of a Conveyance Allowance to these students will not impact the funding paid to DR schools.

Please note that when assessing eligibility for a conveyance allowance payment, the Ministry will measure the distance from the student's home address to the Ministry Designed Route, regardless of whether the school runs the route as designed. Where a school is choosing to not run the Ministry Designed Route, the school is responsible for paying a transport allowance to all students that are bypassed by the revised route.

Schools are responsible for providing Conveyance Allowance application forms to caregivers upon request and ensuring that application forms are complete before submission to the Ministry. A copy of the application form can be found on the Ministry's [website](#).

Schools should send completed application forms to school.transport@education.govt.nz for processing. Either the Principal or another authorised person must sign each form and confirm the student's details.

A Conveyance Allowance application form must be submitted as early as possible for:

- new applications
- a change of address
- a change of school.

Caregivers do not need to complete an application form to request a place on funded school transport. Instead, they should contact the Bus Controller at their child's school to confirm eligibility.

⁴ Distances are measured by the shortest public road or pedestrian route from the home roadside gate to the Ministry Designed Route.

Communicating with caregivers/whanau and students

Schools are responsible for notifying caregivers/whanau and students of:

- the transport assistance they provide
- transport service information such as route name, transport route, PUDOs and travel times
- changes to routes or stops
- rules around PUDO
- behavioural expectations
- safety information and caregiver/whanau responsibilities.

Schools should provide as much notice as possible to caregivers prior to the implementation of changes.

Supervising transport loading and unloading

Schools have a responsibility to support a safe environment for loading and unloading on school grounds. To ensure safe procedures are in place during PUDOs, schools should:

- create documented processes for safe loading and unloading of students
- choose a safe PUDO location at the school
- supervise loading and unloading every afternoon and every morning
- control traffic on school property (when necessary) and guide the driver safely through the loading zone
- communicate clear instructions for safe loading and unloading to students (including how to safely store bags—on laps, or under the seat in front)
- remind caregivers and whanau of their responsibilities for ensuring student safety (e.g., not parking in vehicle bays, adhering to the speed limit of 20 km/h on either side of the road while passing a stationary school bus) and issuing guidelines as necessary
- work collaboratively and proactively with TSPs to address safety hazards.

Managing student behaviour on school transport

Schools must clearly communicate expectations of acceptable standards of student behaviour and take appropriate steps to manage any unsafe or inappropriate behaviour, as in any other area of school life. (See the Students and Caregivers/Whanau section for more information on expectations for student behaviour.)

Where a student's behaviour presents an ongoing or serious problem the school may decide to revoke the offer of a place on funded transport. This may be a temporary or permanent measure, depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the school. If a student loses their place on funded school transport, the caregiver/whanau needs to ensure they are meeting their legal obligation to get their child to school. In this scenario, caregivers/whanau are not entitled to a Conveyance Allowance paid by the Ministry of Education.

Schools may choose to establish a Code of Conduct, signed by the student, their caregiver/whanau, the school and the TSP (if any). A sample Code of Conduct can be found on the Ministry's [website](#).

Incident and emergency management

In the event of an accident or incident involving School Transport Assistance all schools should offer information and support to students and caregivers as necessary during and after an incident or emergency.

Schools are also required to report incidents or near misses on school transport services provided under the funding agreement to the Ministry.

Key contacts for schools

Enquiries regarding transport services provided to schools should be directed to the Ministry's regional School Transport staff. Contact information is provided below. Please refer to the Ministry's [website](#) for up-to-date information.

Location	Region Transport Advisors (route or service delivery)	Transport Contract Managers (funding agreement and reporting)
Tai Tokerau	Kyla Cameron ST.Northern@education.govt.nz	Michael.Salanoa@education.govt.nz
Auckland	North and West Auckland – Kyla Cameron Central, East and South Auckland – Reade Nikora ST.Auckland@education.govt.nz	Philip.Knight@education.govt.nz Rahmon.Gude@education.govt.nz
Waikato	Reade Nikora ST.Waikato@education.govt.nz	Dave.Cox@education.govt.nz
Bay of Plenty – Wairariki	Tracey Tupai-Rewi ST.Bayofplenty@education.govt.nz	Rahmon.Gude@education.govt.nz Dave.Cox@education.govt.nz Peter.Patterson@education.govt.nz
Hawke's Bay/Tairāwhiti	Janice Kennerley ST.Eastern@education.govt.nz	Peter.Patterson@education.govt.nz
Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu, Wellington	Dylan Stewart ST.Western@education.govt.nz	Gary.Northcott@education.govt.nz
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	Jem Pupich ST.Tasman@education.govt.nz	Alan.Stott@education.govt.nz
Canterbury	Craig Reynolds ST.Canterbury@education.govt.nz	Alan.Stott@education.govt.nz
Central Otago/Waitaki	Craig Reynolds ST.Canterbury@education.govt.nz	Michael.Harrison@education.govt.nz
Otago/Southland	Dermott Harris ST.Southern@education.govt.nz	Michael.Harrison@education.govt.nz

4. Students and caregivers/whānau

Overview

Caregivers are ultimately responsible for getting their children to school. However, the Ministry may provide school transport assistance to help students overcome barriers to education due to distance or accessibility.

Applications

Caregivers should contact their school to confirm whether their child is eligible for school transport assistance and the type of assistance that is offered.

Conveyance Allowance

If a student is eligible for school transport assistance but lives more than 2.4km from the Ministry Designed Route, their caregiver may be eligible for a Conveyance Allowance. Schools can provide caregivers with the Conveyance Allowance application form, or caregivers can download the form from the Ministry's [website](#).

Caregivers must complete Section A and take it to their child's school. Schools are responsible for submitting applications for Conveyance Allowance to the Ministry.

Safety and behaviour

To ensure a safe environment for loading and unloading, caregivers should:

- not park in bus bays
- adhere to the speed limit (**20 km/h while passing a stationary school bus** on either side of the road)
- try to eliminate the need for children to cross the road
- ensure children get to and from the bus stop safely
- teach children not to run across the road.

Caregivers should encourage their children to follow these safety and behaviour guidelines throughout their journey.

Safety and behaviour tips for students

Getting on the school bus/van	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait in the designated place—well back from the road • Wait until the school bus/van stops and doors open before approaching • Carry your bag in front of you so it doesn't get caught in the door • If there is a seat available, sit down straight away and remain seated for the whole journey
On the school bus/van	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow all instructions from the driver • No eating, drinking, smoking or vaping • Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated • Don't shout or in any way distract the driver • Respect the transport provider's property • Respect other passengers • When seated, wear a seatbelt (if available) and put your bag on your lap or under the seat in front of you • If standing, stay behind the driver • Don't stand or sit in the door wells
Getting off the school bus/van	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait for the bus/van to come to a stop before making your way to the door • Use the front door if possible • Wait well back from the road until the bus/van has moved away • Only cross the road when there is no traffic in either direction

Conditions of carriage

Students are expected to comply with the behaviour guidelines above and any code of conduct or conditions of carriage issued by the school or any transport provider.

If a student's behaviour is disruptive or poses a safety risk, the school will take appropriate steps to manage this behaviour, and the student could lose their place on the school bus/van (please note if the driver judges that it is no longer safe to continue the route, the school or the Police will be contacted to remove the student from the bus/van). If a student loses their place on the school bus/van, the caregiver needs to ensure they are meeting their legal obligation to get their child to school. Caregivers are not entitled to a Conveyance Allowance paid by the Ministry in this situation.

Key contacts for caregivers

Enquiries regarding	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligibility• Assistance provided• Where a funded vehicle is provided:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport routes• Pick up/drop-off points	Your school