**WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE?**

Transport assistance is a targeted service provided by the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) to support children and students with disabilities.

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**WHO APPROVES AND ORGANISES TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE?**

All transport assistance including emergency arrangements is approved by the Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) and organised and implemented by Transport Services Unit (DECS). Transport arrangements cannot be made directly between taxi/bus drivers, taxi companies, parents/caregivers and preschool/school leaders and staff.

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**CAN TEMPORARY CHANGES BE MADE TO THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS?**

Any temporary changes of address, must be made between departmental personnel and the parents/caregivers. Temporary arrangements involving a change of address must not be made between parents/caregivers and taxi/bus drivers.

Taxi/bus drivers will be informed of any changes through the taxi/bus company.

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**CAN TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE BE PROVIDED TO TRANSPORT A CHILD TO RESpite CARE?**

A change of delivery point for the purpose of respite care will be supported on existing school runs in certain circumstances through Departmental personnel.

Any respite care arrangements must be made between Departmental personnel and the parents/caregivers. Respite care arrangements must not be made between drivers and parents/caregivers.

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**WHAT ARE TAXI/BUS DRIVERS’ RESPONSIBILITIES?**

Taxi/BUS drivers have responsibility for

- ensuring the safety of children/students while entering, travelling in and alighting from the bus and/or taxi
- ensuring children/students wear an approved seat belt when fitted
- ensuring that child safety locks are on at all times
- ensuring that the engine of the taxi/bus is turned off whilst children/students are loaded/unloaded
- responding appropriately to difficult behaviour—under no circumstance can drivers remove children/students from the bus-taxi during the journey or use corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure
- reporting promptly all incidents that occur on the bus/taxi to the site director, principal or nominated staff person of the preschool-school
- ensuring that children/students sit in assigned seats as directed by the director/principal
- delivering children/students to an approved supervised address attended by a responsible adult
- delivering children/students to an approved supervised address attended by a responsible adult
- adhering to bus/taxi timetable and the shortest route where possible
- abstaining from smoking in the presence of children/students (Smoking in Departmental preschool/school grounds is prohibited at all times.)
- having access to a two way radio and/or mobile phone
- not conducting personal business whilst transporting children/students with disabilities
- forwarding running sheets to taxi-bus companies promptly
- not making contact, either by telephone, in writing or in person, with a student outside of travelling times
- not giving gifts of any kind to passengers, including lollies and drinks unless directed by Principal
- not touching passengers inappropriately
- not engaging in any conversations with passengers that may be considered inappropriate. This includes swearing and questioning children about aspects of their home life.
- ensuring that authorised taxis/buses are used for transport (no use of private vehicles)
- Ensuring children’s/student’s bags/equipment are placed in the boot if possible

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**WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS?**

Parents/caregivers have a responsibility for

- providing emergency contact numbers to the preschool/school
- updating information when necessary
- notifying taxi/bus company if the child/student is going to be absent on a particular school day
- ensuring children/students are ready to meet the transport at the specified time and place
- assisting or lifting children/students in and out of vehicles and ensuring that children/students are safely secured
- being present or organising for a responsible person to be present at the pick up-drop off point to provide supervision
- providing appropriate seating if necessary eg booster seat, car seat, rubber backed seat covering (all preschool children require a booster seat during transit)
- immediately notifying the director/principal about any transport issues of concern

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**WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESCHOOL/SCHOOL’S RESPONSIBILITIES?**

The preschool/school has a responsibility for

- notifying parents/caregivers, whenever possible, in relation to taxi run changes or changes to regular taxi/bus drivers
- providing care for children/students/staff until they reach the designated drop off point by
  - ensuring that children/students are safely secured in vehicles
  - organising for a responsible person to be present at the preschool/school to supervise and assist children/students with boarding or alighting transport
  - monitoring the behaviour of children/students during transportation by speaking with the driver on a regular basis
  - liaising with the driver
- providing the driver with information of specific behaviour management strategies including the placement of children/students in the vehicle
- resolving issues of concern in consultation with SERU, parents/caregivers and taxi companies/drivers
- developing strategies for emergency situations
- suspending students from transport when necessary, in consultation with the Manager, SERU
- completing the payment form (ED079) every fortnight and submitting to Transport Services Unit to facilitate payments to service providers
- developing and implementing emergency procedures where appropriate
**Transport Assistance**

**for Children and Students with Disabilities**

**WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?**

**Preschool Director / Principal of School**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE UNIT**

- Telephone: 8235 2871
- TTY: 8235 0465
- Facsimile: 8235 1907
- admin@seru.sa.edu.au
- [http://web.seru.sa.edu.au](http://web.seru.sa.edu.au)

**TRANSPORT SERVICES UNIT**

- Telephone: 8226 1130
- Facsimile: 8226 1678
- decs.transport@saugov.sa.gov.au

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**CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

Taxi/bus drivers should be aware of individual preschool/school emergency procedures to be enacted in situations such as:

- vehicle breakdown
- vehicle accident
- absence of a responsible adult to receive the child/student
- behaviour management in the bus/taxi
- health care issues

Copies of the preschool/school emergency procedures should be made available to all relevant parties including parents/caregivers and taxi/bus drivers.

Taxi/bus drivers should inform the preschool/school and taxi/bus company as soon as an emergency occurs.

**CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

Taxi/bus drivers must raise any concerns/complaints relating to transport assistance for children and students with disabilities through the director/principal of the preschool/school and the taxi/bus company who will liaise with Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) and/or Transport Services Unit.

If not resolved at that level, complaints will then be forwarded to the Manager, SERU. If a resolution still cannot be achieved, advice will be sought from the Assistant Director, Support and Intervention Services.

In certain instances, issues may be referred to the Special Investigations Unit, DECS.

**DUTY OF CARE**

The Director/Principal of a preschool or school has responsibility for the management of transport assistance for children/students with disabilities at the school site. The coordination of transport assistance within an educational site can be delegated to other staff members.

It is the responsibility of taxi/bus drivers to inform and report to directors/principals duty of care issues relating to children/students that occur whilst loading/embarking, travelling, unloading/disembarking.