4.10 Transport

4.10.1 School contract bus services

4.10.1.1 Contract bus guidelines

For information on the operation and conduct of school contract bus services, see:

- School Bus Services—Instructions to Principals (Coordinating Schools): Primary and Secondary Schools. This document defines in detail the complementary roles of the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Infrastructure and other state-operated bodies.
- Guidelines for the Administration of Transport Services for Students Attending Special Schools and Special Developmental Schools, December 1995.

4.10.1.2 Emergency procedures

- Principals responsible for the supervision and local administration of school bus services, in consultation with bus contractors and drivers and the local Regional Emergency Coordinator must ensure that comprehensive emergency plans are developed. These plans should include procedures to be followed in the event of a bus accident, bush fires and floods or the students being involved in accidents, which may or may not result in injuries. The plans should also include procedures for situations when students become ill or require urgent medical attention. The emergency plans should be revised regularly.

- All drivers and the principals of schools with students travelling on the buses should be provided with details of the emergency plan and should understand their respective responsibilities.

- In all instances where school buses are involved in traffic accidents or any type of incident, the Emergency and Security Management Unit must be notified on 03 9589 6266 (twenty four hours) as soon as practicable after any necessary emergency services have been called.

4.10.2 Use of public transport

4.10.2.1 Transport for school excursions, sport and other activities

Some schools do not use rail or tram transport for travel to and from school sports and other excursions, although it may be practicable and convenient. It has been a long-standing policy of government to use rail and tram services wherever practicable as it is of benefit to the State’s finances.

Therefore, when arrangements are being made for such transport, the following procedures should be followed:
• public transport should be used if practicable
• authorities controlling public transport services should be approached first to ascertain what services they can provide before any approach is made to charter or public bus operators
• at least a fortnight’s notice of requirements should be given to transport authorities.

Teachers arranging transport should discuss the most suitable time of travel with the transport authorities and, where possible, arrange for the starting and finishing times for events such as sports meetings to be scheduled accordingly.

4.10.2.2 Hire of buses for sports meetings and other activities

Sports meetings are generally held at times that allow transport to be engaged in off-peak hours, therefore bus operators are usually able to offer lower charges. In cases where meetings finish late, buses that may be required for route or other work at a particular time are consequently behind schedule. A bus that does not meet its contracted requirements puts the bus operator in breach of their contract, which has possible serious legal consequences.

The Bus Association of Victoria has advised that where a school or group of schools create such a situation by running late, the bus operator will have no choice but to charge an extra rate. Sometimes if another bus has to be brought in because the original bus is not able to be substituted under the terms of the school bus contract, the cost could be extremely high. Schools involved in sports or other group activities should ensure that the agreed times are observed where bus transport is used.

4.10.2.3 Buses: alterations to school finishing times

Variation to school finishing times without advice to the transport operator can result in public transport that is operating to a regular timetable being overloaded, while the transport normally scheduled to pick up school students is empty.

When a school with students who travel by public transport alters its finishing time, it is essential that the appropriate transport proprietor or authority be advised as early as practicable by the principal of the school to enable consideration of amended transport timetables.

4.10.2.4 Student concessions

The Met and V/Line issue student concession cards and student passes for full-time primary and secondary students provided they are citizens or permanent residents of Australia. Students participating in an overseas exchange program are also eligible.

Full-fee paying overseas students and students on temporary visas, even though they may be holders of an international student ID card, are not eligible for concession travel.
Student concession cards

The Met and V/Line primary/secondary concession cards entitle the holders to purchase concession fares on all passenger services operated by the Met and V/Line in Victoria, as well as all railway-operated interstate country services in Australia. When applying for a card, students are required to provide two passport-size photographs, or one original and a clear photocopy. The original photograph must be glued to the detachable student concession card photo portion and overstamped with the school stamp to cover the photograph and surrounding area. The second photograph or photocopy must be glued to the space for office records only section and also be overstamped with the school stamp.

Student passes

Met student passes

Met student passes are for primary and secondary students only. They are issued for Zone 1 residents or zones 2, 3 and country Victoria residents and are available for unlimited travel within zones 1, 2 and 3 on all Met services at all times, including weekends and school holidays. Students must, however, hold a valid primary/secondary student concession card.

Regional transit student passes

Regional transit passes, for primary/secondary students only, may be issued to any student holding a valid primary or secondary student concession card. These passes are available for unlimited travel, including weekends and school holidays, on all buses with the following transit bus systems: Geelong Transit, Ballarat Transit, Bendigo Bus and Southwest Transit.

Student date-to-date tickets

Student date-to-date tickets may be issued from all V/Line stations to any student holding a valid primary/secondary student concession card. This periodical ticket is available for unlimited travel between the specified stations for a minimum period of six weeks, and a maximum period that does not exceed the date on the student concession card.

4.10.3 Conveyance allowances

Conveyance allowances are payments to parents/guardians through the school to assist with the cost of student travel expenses.

4.10.3.1 Eligibility

Students who attend government and registered schools and who reside in country regions, some outer areas of metropolitan regions and those who attend specialist schools and facilities anywhere in the state may be eligible for a conveyance allowance.

In general, to be eligible for a conveyance allowance a student must reside not less than 4.8 km from the nearest school.
Detailed information is provided in the Guidelines for the Administration of Conveyance Allowances for Student Travel 2003 (Department of Education and Training, December 2002) at:


4.10.3.2 Primary and secondary students

A conveyance allowance is available for eligible students who attend primary and secondary schools located:

- in all non-metropolitan Department of Education and Training regions
- in the following metropolitan local government areas, excluding the postcode areas noted:
  - Mornington Peninsula: no postcode excluded
  - Bass Coast: no postcode excluded
  - Frankston: all postcodes excluded except 3930 (Mt Eliza), 3910 (Langwarrin), 3911 (Baxter)
  - South Gippsland: no postcode excluded
  - Casey: postcodes excluded: 3177 (Doveton), 3802 (Endeavour Hills), 3803 (Hallam), 3976 (Hampton Park), 3975 (Lyndhurst, Lynbrook, 3804 (Narre Warren North), 3805 (Narre Warren)
  - Cardinia: no postcode excluded
  - Manningham: postcodes excluded: 3113 (Warrandyte), 3134 (Warrandyte South), 3115 (Wonga Park)
  - Yarra Ranges: postcodes excluded: 3116 (Chirnside Park), 3137 (Kilsyth), 3138 (Mooroolbark), 3156 (Lysterfield), 3158 (Upwey), 3159 (Selby), 3160 (Belgrave), 3765 (Montrose), 3767 (Mount Dandenong), 3787 (Sassafras), 3791 (Kallista), 3785 (Tremont), 3786 (Ferny Creek), 3788 (Olinda), 3789 (Sherbrooke), 3792 (The Patch), 3804 (Narre Warren East)
  - Nillumbik: postcodes excluded: 3088 (Greensborough), 3089 (Diamond Creek), 3090 (Plenty), 3091 (Yarrambat), 3095 (Eltham North), 3096 (Wattle Glen), 3097 (Kangaroo Ground), 3113 (Warrandyte North), 3083 (Bundoora)
  - Whittlesea: postcodes excluded: 3074 (Thomastown), 3075 (Lalor), 3082 (Mill Park), 3083 (Bundoora), 3752 (South Morang)
  - Hume: postcodes excluded: 3036 (Keilor), 3045 (Melbourne International Airport), 3047 (Broadmeadows), 3048 (Meadow Heights/Coolaroo), 3049 (Attwood/Westmeadows), 3059 (Greenvale), 3061 (Campbellfield), 3062 (Somerton).
  - Melton: postcodes excluded: 3037 (Hillside/Delahey), 3023 (Burnside)
  - Wyndham: postcodes excluded: 3026 (Laverton North), 3028 (Laverton).

4.10.3.3 Specialist school settings

A conveyance allowance is available to eligible students who attend the following specialist settings:
- deaf facilities
- English language schools/centres/units
- language units
- secondary teaching units
- social adjustment centres
- specialist schools
- special developmental schools.

4.10.4 School owned/hired vehicles

4.10.4.1 Purchase of vehicles

Due to the possible effects on the bus industry generally, it has been decided that for the present no government school will be permitted to acquire a bus with an adult seating capacity of twenty-one or more passengers.

Schools intending to purchase other vehicles must obtain the prior approval of the appropriate regional director.

4.10.4.2 Bus license and safety requirements

A school that owns a passenger vehicle with more than twelve passenger seats (including the driver) must be accredited with the Public Transport Safety Directorate. The vehicle must be appropriately insured and be regularly inspected by a licensed bus tester.

Recommendations as to repairs and so on must be acted upon as soon as possible. All repairs must be completed by a qualified mechanic, and the school must meet all costs of purchase and maintenance of the vehicle.

Schools should ensure that school buses are adequately maintained and roadworthy at all times.

4.10.4.3 Driver licence and certificate requirements

For vehicles that carry up to twelve people and whose gross vehicle mass (GVM) does not exceed 4.5t, an ordinary driver's licence is adequate.

For all other vehicles, the driver needs a licence varied (endorsed) to a higher classification. The following bus categories currently exist:

- small bus: thirty seats or less (including the driver), with two axles
- light bus: more than thirty seats with two or more axles and less than 15t GVM
- heavy bus: any rigid bus other than a small or light bus.

A holder of any truck category licence is permitted to drive a small bus.

If the vehicle to be driven is licensed as a private omnibus or commercial passenger vehicle, a driver's certificate is required.
It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the driver of a school bus holds a correct and current driver licence and, if appropriate, driver’s certificate.

Note: Students are not permitted under any circumstances to drive buses for school activities, including camps or excursions held outside normal school hours.

4.10.4.4 Hire-drive buses

Schools intending to use hire-drive buses should ensure that the vehicle to be hired has correct and current accreditation, third party insurance and comprehensive insurance. Every endeavour should also be made to ensure that the vehicle has been adequately maintained and is roadworthy. The sighting of a certificate of inspection from a licensed bus tester issued within the last twelve months may be considered to be satisfactory by the hirer.

4.10.5 Bus restrictions

4.10.5.1 Bus and driver requirements for hazardous areas

For hazardous areas, the driver must hold a driver’s certificate with an ‘endorsement for hazardous areas’ issued by VicRoads. To obtain this endorsement the driver must complete a hazardous area driving course conducted by an accredited provider.

No private omnibus may operate in these areas without an inspection to determine whether it is fit to do so. The inspection is undertaken by a licensed bus tester who issues a label authorising the vehicle to operate in prescribed areas. Vehicles not authorised will not be permitted into any prescribed area.

The following mechanical requirements are also necessary before a bus can be driven in prescribed hazardous areas:

- The vehicle must be fitted with:
  - a full dual-circuit service braking system
  - heavy-duty batteries and a battery charging system
  - heavy-duty windscreen wipers
  - adequate demisting and saloon heating equipment.

- The vehicle must carry:
  - a spare wheel, a jack and a wheel brace
  - approved wheel chains in good condition capable of being attached to the outer drive wheels of the vehicle (see below)
  - wheel chocks and a torch/lead light
  - a shovel and a bag of gravel or dry cement not less than 20 kg in weight.

If the vehicle is fitted with twin steering axles, it must not be used in a prescribed area.
The vehicle must not tow a trailer unless written approval is obtained from VicRoads.

### 4.10.5.2 Wheel chains

The following specifications have been determined by VicRoads:

- Buses operating to Victorian snow resort areas must be equipped with approved wheel chains capable of secure fitment and sufficient in number to ensure fitment to at least the outer drive wheels.
- Any device or equipment necessary for fitting or tightening the chains must be carried.
- All chains must be marked with at least the size or sizes of tyre that they are to be used with, being within the size range for which the particular chain assembly is suitable. The marking is to be on a suitable area of the lever arm fastener fitting, or on-tag securely fitted near to the attachment area.
- Generally approved chains must be fully wraparound types of diamond or alternative pattern consisting of sections of chains diagonally across the tread surface and may include transverse/longitudinal sections. Chains with transverse sections only (ladder type) are not permitted.
- For generally approved chains, the cleats must be of loose-linked chain—at least 8 mm (5/16”) chain for small omnibuses (see 4.10.4.3 for small buses) and at least 9.5 mm (3/8”) chain for large omnibuses (see 4.10.4.3 for light and heavy buses) and provide a continuous pattern around the circumference of the tyre.
- The maximum measurement of open space within a pattern and at the join following the circumference of the tyre shall not exceed 400 mm for chains fitted to tyres on 20” or larger rims, and 350 mm for chains fitted to rims of less than 20” diameter.
- Chains, attachments and adjustment devices must be of adequate strength and design to properly secure the chain assembly and prevent accidental disengagement.
- Chains and associated equipment must be maintained in good condition at all times.
- Chains of lesser material sizes than those specified above may be specifically approved by VicRoads. However, such approval is unlikely to be granted unless the chains are proprietary special alloy diamond pattern chains to the above specifications apart from the material size.
- The following diamond pattern chains have been specifically approved:
  - Rud-Greifsteg and Super Greifsteg
  - Erlau-Olympic
  - Gunnebo-SFR
  - Konig-Polar S, Rallye, No Problem P1 and T2
  - Weissenfels-A80 Titanus
  - Piranha: Easy Fit (may be labelled Simaka-Nevada Rambo)
  - Pewag-CL.
This approval is conditional upon the tyre size(s) being marked on each chain and the installed chains meeting the open space limitation, particularly at the join.

### 4.10.5.3 Bus access to hazardous areas

This section sets out the various conditions that apply to bus operation in prescribed hazardous areas. These areas are prescribed annually and should be checked in the *Victorian Government Gazette*.

The following are prescribed areas during the period 8 June to 8 October:

- **Mount Buller**: The Mount Buller Alpine Road from the junction of the Mount Stirling Road to the Mount Buller Alpine Village.
- **Mount Hotham**: The Alpine Way from Harrietville over Mount Hotham to Omeo.
- **Falls Creek**: The Bogong High Plains Road from Mount Beauty via Falls Creek to the Omeo Highway.
- **Mount Buffalo**: The road from the National Parks Service control gate situated at the base of Mount Buffalo to the top of Mount Buffalo.
- **Mount Baw Baw**: The Mount Baw Baw Road from Tanjil Bren to Mount Baw Baw.
- **Lake Mountain**: The Marysville–Woods Point Tourist Road beyond the Lake Mountain turn-off.
- **Mount Donna Buang**: The Acheron Way north of Cement Creek and the Healesville–Warburton Road between Panton Gap and the summit.
- **Mount St Gwinear**: The Thompson Valley Road from the Thompson Dam Road intersection to Rocky Knob and the Mount St Gwinear Road from Rocky Knob to the Mount St Gwinear car park.
- **Mount Stirling**: The Mount Stirling Road from the intersection of the Mount Buller Alpine Road at Mirimbah to Telephone Box Junction.
- **Mount Torbreck**: The Mount Torbreck Road.
- **Mount Tamboritha**: The Mount Tamboritha Road between the last crossing of the Wellington River and Mount Tamboritha (currently the end of the sealed road surface).
- **Licola Area**: The Target Creek Road between Licola and Glencairn and the Jamieson–Licola–Heyfield Road between Licola and Violet Hill.

### 4.10.5.4 Loadings on charter buses

Seats should be available for all children of fifteen years of age or more, and loading in excess of authorised bus seating should occur only on the basis of three primary school children to two adults seats where circumstances permit.

In determining the number of students to be carried in a bus, schools should take into account the size of the students, the distance to be travelled, and the design of the seats.

Teachers should bear in mind the loading requirements above when assessing the number of vehicles required.
4.10.5.5 Loadings on school-owned and hire-drive buses

Passengers up to the registered limit may be carried on these buses. In general, standees are not allowed on such buses. However, primary school students may be seated three for two in appropriate seats.

4.10.5.6 Loadings on school buses

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Transport have agreed on the following guiding principles in determining the number of students that may be carried on a school bus:

- As many students as possible should be seated. To achieve this aim, students should be allocated specific seats. Three primary school students may be seated in a space allowed for two adults where the size of the students and the design of the seat allows.
- If the above requirements are complied with, up to twelve children may be permitted to stand in a bus provided that vehicle, road and other safety factors permit. No child is to stand for a distance in excess of 10 km, and no standing is permitted in any vehicle with a seating capacity of less than twenty-five adults, or a coach-type vehicle with a centre aisle width of less than 380 mm, or a vehicle whose assessed carrying capacity does not allow for standees, or where the speed limit exceeds 80 kph.
- When the number of students standing is considered excessive, the bus coordinator should advise the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s regional transport officer and the Department of Transport in writing.
- Where the number of students exceeds the carrying capacity for the vehicle, including standees, the bus coordinator should inform the regional officer as well as the Department of Transport.

4.10.6 Use of private cars

4.10.6.1 Use of motor vehicles on official business when the owner receives a travelling allowance

It is a condition of an owner’s entitlement to claim reimbursement or to receive approval to use their motor vehicle on official business that they have a comprehensive insurance policy that includes liability at law by way of damages to an amount of not less than $20 million and an indemnity to the Crown.

It is probable that present insurance policies already meet the above requirements except that they indemnify the ‘employer’ rather than the Crown, in which case it will be necessary for the policies to be endorsed to the effect that ‘employer’ includes the Crown.

It is important before any approval is given to use private cars used on Department business that the owner’s comprehensive motor vehicle policy be sighted.
Before any person can claim expenses for the use of a private vehicle on official duty, it is first necessary to have the vehicle approved for use on duty.

More information can be found at the following site:


Persons who are approved to receive reimbursement for using their motor cars on official business shall be issued with written authorities that shall specify the conditions under which the vehicles may be so used.

For information relating to reimbursement for travel see HR Section 6.

4.10.6.2 Use of motor vehicles on official business when the owner receives no official reimbursement

Where employees of the Crown use their vehicles for official business, including school activities, they must have a comprehensive insurance policy that includes liability at law by way of damages to an amount of not less than $20 million and an indemnity to the Crown.

The use of a staff member’s private vehicle on official school business is at the discretion of the owner. Teachers or other school staff must not be directed by the principal or anyone else to transport other adults or students in their private vehicles in connection with any school program or function.

4.10.6.3 Student drivers

Students are not permitted under any circumstances (except in accordance with an approved pre-licence, driver education program, see 4.4.5.5. Traffic safety education) to transport other students in private cars in connection with any school program or function whether held during normal school hours or at other times.

Students driving to and from school is a separate issue. Where student drivers wish to consider carrying other student passengers to and from school, schools can address this situation appropriately with a shared community response. The Student Driver Policy Guidelines have been produced in collaboration with the Transport Accident Commission. These guidelines provide advice on issues and strategies when schools have students that drive to and from school. The guidelines assist schools, parents, and students to develop a response to suit their local needs. See the Department’s Traffic Safety Education website at:


4.10.6.4 Parents/guardians and volunteer workers’ cars

The use of volunteer workers’ vehicles is discouraged, although it is recognised that there are occasions when there will be no practical alternative. In such cases, the relevant instructions contained in 4.4.2.10 apply.
4.10.6.5  Application for approval to use private vehicle

Prior to using a vehicle for official duties, the application to use a private vehicle on official duty form should be completed.

Information regarding this can be found at:


Note: Proof of a special comprehensive vehicle insurance policy is required (renewal notice), as is a copy of the current vehicle registration certificate.

The approving officer signs the form when satisfied that all conditions have been met. This requires the sighting of the applicant's:

- current driver licence
- current vehicle registration
- comprehensive insurance with $20 million damages liability and Crown indemnity.

Note: A separate application must be made for each vehicle to be used on official duty, and approval must be renewed once the insurance policy has expired.

4.10.6.6  Parking in school grounds

The use of school grounds for staff car parking is a matter for local decision by the school council. The council, in reaching its decision, should at least consider:

- any local parking regulations
- the volume of traffic on adjacent roads
- the availability of space for parking within the grounds
- the possible danger to students.

If space is set aside for a staff car park, care should be taken to ensure that light-duty asphalt will not be damaged and that the playing space is not unduly limited.

In general, if street parking is allowed then it should be used. Staff should be informed that parking in the school grounds is at the owner’s risk.

For details on the standards for on-site car parking see 7.24.2.1.

4.10.7  Road regulation changes

Principals should be aware of road rule changes that effect schools and school communities and ensure that their schools and school activities comply with surrounding traffic requirements.

Local government authorities control signage for local roads.

VicRoads is responsible for major roads and maintains a website that provides notice of changes to road rules and updated road regulations at:
Click on Road rules under the heading ‘Frequent Questions About…’ for all up-to-date road regulations.

In 1999, there were significant changes to road regulations that effect primary and secondary age students. These changes were outlined in Circulars 169/99 and 170/99 (available on EduLibrary at Schools/Official Memoranda, Circulars & Notices/Departmental Circulars/1999).

Resources

Website:


Contact:

Student Transport

Infrastructure Division

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Telephone: 9637 3461