



# **Transport for students to Intensive English Units Code of Good Practice**

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Version 2

## Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>The service.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>How to apply for transport.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.1 Parent/carer responsibilities .....	3
	2.2 School responsibilities.....	3
	2.3 Public Transport Branch responsibilities.....	4
	2.4 Transport Service Provider responsibilities.....	4
<b>3</b>	<b>What happens when travel is approved.....</b>	<b>4</b>
	3.1 Parent/carer duties and responsibilities .....	4
	3.2 School duties and responsibilities.....	5
	3.3 Drivers' duties and responsibilities .....	5
	3.4 Transport service provider duties and responsibilities .....	6
	3.5 Public Transport Branch duties and responsibilities.....	6
<b>4</b>	<b>Application form.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Change of request for transport.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Processing time.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>What happens if students do not comply with the 'Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel' .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>What happens if a student is missing from the bus and is not dropped-off to the designated bus stop/shelter .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>What happens when a parent/carer does not meet the bus for preschool, transition or less competent students.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Review of the 'Code of Good Practice' .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Contacts.....</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1 The service

The Northern Territory Government provides transport assistance to and from school for eligible preschool, primary (including transition), middle and senior school students to attend Intensive English Schools Annexes/Units, whose English language abilities prevent them travelling independently to and from school.

Eligibility is determined by the Department of Education's Intensive English Schools, and is subject to their internal procedures. It is also determined by the time allowed to transport students from pick-up to drop-off points.

Students who are eligible for transport are picked-up from the closest bus stop/shelter, taken to their school and returned at the end of the school day.

The safety of students using the transport service is a priority that requires the collaborative effort of parents/carers, schools, the Department of Education, transport service providers, drivers and the Public Transport Branch.

# 2 How to apply for transport

The Department of Education's Intensive English Units assesses each student to determine their needs and eligibility for transport assistance.

Once this has been determined, the transport service provider is advised and then arranges for the students transport. They then advise the Public Transport Branch.

The aim of this section is to explain the responsibilities of all parties involved in the application for and provision of Intensive English Unit transport.

## 2.1 Parent/carer responsibilities

- Provide relevant information to the school regarding the student.
- Receive a copy of the 'Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel' from the school.
- Be aware that the requested transport service is subject to availability.
- Be aware that the school is the first point of contact by the parent/carer for any changes to travel arrangements.
- Be aware that the process in place for the transport request may take up to two working days to action from the time the transport service provider receives the request.

## 2.2 School responsibilities

- Complete the database recording all information relevant to organising transport for the student.
- Give parents/carers the 'Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel' and explain the responsibilities of all parties involved.
- Advise parents/carers that the school is the first point of contact for transport arrangements.
- Inform parents/carers of the decision regarding the eligibility of the student transport request.

- Explain where the student will be picked-up and dropped-off on the dedicated bus route and advise that requests for transport may take up to two working days to process.
- Provide an electronic report on transport needs for students to the Public Transport Branch and transport service provider.

### 2.3 Public Transport Branch responsibilities

- Receive the report of transport requests from the Intensive English Units.
- Note if the transport service provider has confirmed the request for transport.
- Notify the transport service provider of any changes to student transport requirements received from the Intensive English Units. In an emergency, this is to be actioned as soon as possible. Other changes (i.e. time or address changes) may take up to two working days.

### 2.4 Transport Service Provider responsibilities

- Assess route timing on receipt of the transport request.
- Advise the Intensive English Unit and the Public Transport Branch of the outcome, including pick-up times if applicable. The Intensive English Unit advises the parent/carer.
- Provide the relevant service.

## 3 What happens when travel is approved

This section explains the duties and responsibilities of all parties involved once the Intensive English Unit determines transport eligibility.

### 3.1 Parent/carer duties and responsibilities

- Ensure the student is ready for pick-up from the designated bus stop/shelter before the bus is scheduled to arrive in the morning. If the student is not at the designated bus stop/shelter, the driver will continue on the scheduled bus route.
- Ensure the student is competent to be dropped-off at the designated bus stop/shelter and is able to get home in a safe manner.
- If the student attends preschool or transition, or if the parent/carer and school deem a student in a higher schooling level is not competent to catch a bus by himself or herself, a parent/carer must accompany the student to the dedicated bus stop/shelter until the bus arrives. On the return journey, the parent/carer must be at the dedicated bus stop/shelter to receive the student.
- Ensure the students have the appropriate coloured tag on their school bag that determines which bus they are to catch. The tag is to display on one side the students' name, address and contact phone number, and on the other side the name of the school they are attending and its phone number. The coloured tags distinguishing bus runs are:

Yellow Tag	Bus 1 –	Palmerston
Pink Tag	Bus 2 –	City
Orange Tag	Bus 3 –	Northern Suburbs

If students catch more than one bus, the coloured tag is to correspond with the afternoon bus service.

- Advise the school immediately if circumstances or needs change, or if the service is no longer required.

### 3.2 School duties and responsibilities

- Work closely with transport service providers, drivers, parents/carers and the Public Transport Branch to ensure students transport needs are met.
- Assess if students (in consultation with the parent/carer) are competent to catch the bus by themselves and do not require the parent/carer to accompany them to and from the bus stop/shelter. If students are assessed as requiring the parent/carer to accompany them the school is to advise the transport service provider.
- Promptly advise the transport service provider of any changes to a students' needs.
- Issue each student with the appropriate coloured tag that determines which bus route they are to catch.
- Provide relevant documentation to the Public Transport Branch.
- Assist with the smooth operation of the service by ensuring there is supervision at the school transport drop-off and pick-up times.
- Provide suitable areas for buses to drop-off and pick-up students. These areas are to be kept free from obstruction.
- Count each student as they board the bus for the afternoon bus run to ensure that every student is on the bus. Advise the bus driver that all students have boarded the bus.
- Introduce all new students to the bus driver.
- Ensure the bus driver has the relevant information on the pick-up and drop-off points for all students.
- Notify the transport service provider and the Public Transport Branch of any changes to a student's travel arrangements.
- Maintain open communications with parents/carers, the Public Transport Branch and transport service providers.

### 3.3 Drivers' duties and responsibilities

- Be fully aware of the requirements of the role as determined by the employer.
- Remain in the driver's seat when the bus is running and students are on the bus.
- Ensure all students have the appropriate coloured tag on their school bag to confirm they are on the correct bus route.
- Wait for confirmation from the school that all students have boarded the bus, before starting on the scheduled afternoon route.
- Keep the door closed until the vehicle is at a complete standstill. Do not allow students to open or close the doors of the vehicle.
- Always check that doors are properly closed and that nothing is trapped in them.
- Do not drive-off until all students are seated on the bus.
- When setting down, ensure that all students are well clear of the vehicle before moving off.
- Cooperate with the school staff over arrangements for parking, picking-up and setting-down within the school grounds.
- If a new student starts using the bus service, ensure you have been introduced to them by the school.
- Be familiar with all pick-up and drop-off points for all students.
- Drive vehicle in a safe and competent manner and adhere to all road rules.

- In the event of a breakdown or accident, contact the employer immediately. Make every effort to stay with the vehicle and students.
- If it is not safe for students to remain on board, evacuate the vehicle in a calm, orderly manner and take the students to a safe place away from the vehicle.
- Ensure telephone numbers are available for the people who should be contacted in an emergency (i.e. employer and the school serviced).

### 3.4 Transport service provider duties and responsibilities

- Ensure that management and staff are familiar with these guidelines and the conditions of contract for the services.
- Ensure vehicles are in roadworthy condition and are always cleanly presented.
- Only employ fully licensed drivers.
- Ensure telephone numbers are available for the people who should be contacted in an emergency (i.e. the schools served, Intensive English Units, Public Transport Branch and parents/carers).
- Ensure bus drivers are familiar with all pick-up and drop-off points for all students and are aware which students will be met by a parent/carer at drop-off points.
- Have in place contingency plans for dealing with vehicle failures and other emergencies.
- Have in place a procedure for the reporting of incidents and recurrent problems to schools, such as difficulties at pick-up and drop-off points and student misbehaviour.
- Ensure that all services are operated according to the agreed route and schedule wherever possible.

### 3.5 Public Transport Branch duties and responsibilities

- Contract the necessary resources and supervise the services.
- Liaise with schools, transport service providers and the Intensive English Units to ensure the smooth running of the service.
- Provide relevant documentation to transport service providers.

## 4 Application form

After parents/carers have had discussions with the Intensive English Unit about eligibility for transport, the database Student Administration Management System (SAMS) is to be completed in full.

Once complete, a report is to be provided to the transport service provider and the Public Transport Branch.

## 5 Change of request for transport

If a student has changed address or school, the parent/carer needs to advise the Intensive English Unit. The transport service provider and the Public Transport Branch will be advised of the change, and transport will be amended within the one to two working day timeframe.

## 6 Processing time

As with any change, it takes time to process new and changed requirements. New applications should be submitted as soon as possible to allow time for appropriate solutions to be put in place. Authorisation sometimes has to be sought externally, and the Public Transport Branch and transport service provider cannot confirm that transport can be provided until the process is complete.

This procedure can take up to two working days. This also applies to changes of address or school, and existing recipients need to advise the school prior to moving so that transport arrangements can be put in place to the new location.

## 7 What happens if students do not comply with the ‘Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel’

Each year, students going to and from schools in the Northern Territory undertake over one million bus trips.

Students behave appropriately most of the time. However, misbehaviour by some students can make travel unpleasant for their colleagues, distract the driver, result in damage to vehicles or in extreme cases put bus occupants and other road users at serious risk.

To help ensure that school students behave sensibly and safely on the buses, the Department of Transport together with the Department of Education, transport service providers, schools and police, have developed the ‘Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel’ for students, school bus drivers and operators.

The ‘Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel’ is a set of guidelines for students, parents/carers to follow on school buses. It forms the basis for the specific rules to manage behaviour on buses and at interchanges.

It also includes procedures for bus operators, bus drivers and schools to follow and should be read in conjunction with this document.

For a full copy of the ‘Code of Conduct for School Bus Travel’, visit the Department of Transport website.

## 8 What happens if a student is missing from the bus and is not dropped-off to the designated bus stop/shelter

Once it is determined that a student is missing, the following steps are to be followed:

1. The bus driver is to radio into the transport service provider’s depot.
2. The transport service provider is to contact the school or emergency contact number of the school.
3. If the bus is on route, the bus driver is to continue on route and drop-off the other students at their designated bus stops/shelters. This ensures that other students and parents/carers are not inconvenienced.
4. The school is to make contact with the parent/carer.

5. The school is to contact the transport service provider, advising of the outcome after discussions are had with the parent/carer.

The transport service provider is to contact the bus driver and issue instructions in line with advice received by the school and internal procedures.

6. The transport service provider will brief the Public Transport Branch throughout the process.

## 9 What happens when a parent/carer does not meet the bus for preschool, transition or less competent students

If a parent/carer does not meet the preschool, transition or less competent child at the designated bus stop/shelter, the following steps are to be followed:

1. The bus driver is to radio the depot and advise of the situation.
2. The operations section of the transport service provider is to telephone the Intensive English Unit emergency number and advise the situation.
3. The bus is to continue on route and drop-off other students to avoid causing any inconvenience to other students and parents/carers.
4. The Intensive English Unit is to contact the parent/carer to organise the drop-off of the student.
5. The Intensive English Unit is to advise the transport service provider the outcome after discussions with the parent/carer.
6. The transport service provider is to contact the bus driver and issue instructions on transporting the student, which will be followed by the bus driver.
7. If the parent/carer cannot be located, the student is to be returned to the Intensive English Unit and handed over to the responsible school representative.
8. The transport service provider will brief the Public Transport Branch throughout the process.

## 10 Review of the 'Code of Good Practice'

The 'Code of Good Practice' will be reviewed on a two yearly basis, with the next review in 2017. Minor amendments to the 'Code of Good Practice' will be issued as the need arises.

## 11 Contacts

<b>Transport Service Provider</b>	Buslink	8944 2444
<b>Schools</b>	Anula Primary School	8927 9477
	Moil Primary School	8920 6868
	Sanderson Middle School	8927 8899
<b>Public Transport Branch</b>	General enquiries	8924 7666



