

Department and contract school bus driver procedure

This is a mandated procedure under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this procedure must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

1. Overview

This procedure details the responsibilities of school bus drivers. It also contains information about recruiting and paying school bus drivers, as well as driver training and induction.

It applies to department-employed, contracted, volunteer, and excursion bus drivers.

It must be read in conjunction with the [school bus driver policy \(PDF 590 KB\)](#).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all department employees (including school bus drivers) and other stakeholders involved in:

- transporting students to and from school
- transporting students on school-based camps, school events, excursions, and curriculum activities
- school bus driving (including driver regulations and responsibilities).



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4. Detail

Principals with local responsibility for school bus services must manage the following types of bus drivers:

- drivers employed by the department to operate department-owned yellow school buses on morning and afternoon school bus services
- camp and excursion drivers
- volunteer drivers.

Principals must also administer and support drivers from private transport service providers.

Refer to the [school bus management procedure \(PDF 654 KB\)](#) for principals' responsibilities in relation to school bus drivers (staff login required).

4.1. Selection and approval of department-employed school bus drivers

Principals with local responsibility for a department-owned yellow school bus must approve drivers for morning and afternoon school bus routes.

If a new school bus driver is required, the Principal must:

- advertise for a driver in the school newsletter, on social media, or the local newspaper
- shortlist applicants after receiving applications
- interview the shortlisted applicants in accordance with department processes.

The Principal must be satisfied that the applicant:

- holds a valid and appropriate unrestricted heavy vehicle driving licence suitable for the bus size, such as Class LR, MR, HR, HC, or MC (see the [school bus driver policy \(PDF 590 KB\)](#) for additional license information)
- for department-employed yellow bus drivers, holds a valid and appropriate [driver accreditation](#) (see the [school bus driver policy \(PDF 590 KB\)](#) for additional driver accreditation information)
- is responsible, mature, and of good moral character
- can apply basic supervisory skills in relation to students
- can communicate effectively with students, parents, and school staff
- can provide examples that they have had recent (within 3 months), satisfactory bus driving experience in relation to the bus that will be driven
- understands the Australian Road Rules and National Heavy Vehicle Laws.

If selected, the applicant must complete an [ED222: Application for approval to drive a school bus form \(PDF 187 KB\)](#) (staff login required). The Principal will provide copies of the ED222, this procedure, and the school bus driver position description to the applicant.

Copies of the ED222 (signed by the Principal), driver's heavy vehicle licence, and driver accreditation certificate must be sent to TSU to update the driver's pay authority details.

Any medical clearances and certificates should also be held securely at the school.

Principals and school bus drivers must abide by the *Heavy Vehicle National Law (South Australia) Act 2013* (SA). A summary of this Act is available in the [Heavy Vehicle Driver's Handbook](#). It provides relevant information for principals and drivers about operating heavy vehicles.

4.2. Selection and approval of contract-employed school bus drivers

Contract school bus drivers are employed by private transport service providers who hold a contract with the Minister for Education, Training and Skills.

Providers must notify principals when new drivers are available to operate a departmental school bus service and require ED222 authorisation.

Copies of the ED222 (signed by the Principal), driver's heavy vehicle license, and driver accreditation certificate must be kept at the school. The Principal or delegate must also provide a copy of the ED222 to the private transport service provider.

4.3. Driver induction and training

Principals must meet regularly with department-employed yellow school bus drivers and excursion drivers. These meetings are to ensure drivers continue to meet their duties and responsibilities as outlined in their position description, this procedure and the [school bus driver policy \(PDF 590 KB\)](#).

Principals and TSU are responsible for inducting and managing department-employed yellow school bus drivers and ensuring department-employed relief school bus drivers are available.

Principals should liaise with private transport service providers to ensure contract school bus drivers meet department requirements.

Department-owned yellow school buses may be used for driver training and licence testing by people who will become regular or relief department school bus drivers. This is subject to the following conditions:

- TSU approval
- supervision by an appropriately licensed and experienced person
- only the trainee and supervisor may travel on the bus during training.

Training may occur at no cost if the bus travels part of its normal route without children on board. Any additional costs must be covered by the school.

Any driver training must not interfere with scheduled inspections, servicing, maintenance, or repairs to the bus.

4.4. Responsibilities and requirements for school bus drivers

School bus drivers are responsible for safely and reliably transporting students and other approved passengers to and from school. All drivers must meet the following requirements and uphold the responsibilities outlined below.

4.4.1. Driver qualifications and fitness

Drivers must:

- hold a valid heavy vehicle driver's license (such as LR, MR, HR) with no current suspensions
- hold a valid driver accreditation (required for departmental employed yellow bus drivers and contract drivers, not volunteer drivers)
- keep their heavy vehicle driver's license and driver accreditation current
- be fit to drive and comply with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator work and rest requirements
- immediately notify the Principal or line manager if unfit to drive due to fatigue, illness, injury, or any medical condition.

Drivers must not:

- drive with an expired, suspended, or invalid heavy vehicle driver's license or driver accreditation
- drive while impaired by fatigue, alcohol, drugs, or medications (prescription or over the counter) that may impact driving ability.

4.4.2. Driving conduct and compliance

Drivers must:

- follow all road laws, rules, regulations, and speed limits, including a maximum of 80 km/h on unsealed roads
- always drive the school bus safely; with due diligence and use judgement and care in response to the road, weather, and driving conditions.

Drivers must not:

- drive aggressively, including excessive or erratic braking or acceleration
- reverse the bus without a responsible person present to guide, unless imminent danger is present
- drive barefoot, or while wearing high heels, thongs, or similar footwear
- use ear plugs, headphones, earmuffs, or personal electronic devices while driving
- smoke in the vehicle, on school grounds, at bus stops, or near students
- use profane or inappropriate language

- share social media accounts or engage in any electronic communication with students.

4.4.3. Vehicle check and maintenance

Drivers must:

- complete a pre-journey inspection of the bus before each journey
 - department-employed drivers must use the School Bus Pre-Journey Check and Driver Declaration Book
- report and follow correct procedures for any faults or issues identified
- deliver the school bus for scheduled servicing, inspections, maintenance, or repairs as directed by the Principal (or their delegate)
- regularly check that the fire extinguisher is in place and maintained, as per the [preventative maintenance schedule](#) (staff login required)
- ensure the first aid kit is present and fully stocked (required for department drivers only).

4.4.4. Vehicle operations and cleaning

Drivers must:

- refuel the bus as required (no students to be on board when this occurs)
- ensure headlights are switched on when students are on board
- ensure all doors are securely closed before moving the vehicle
- never leave keys in the ignition and always lock the bus when unattended
- maintain a clean and tidy vehicle, inside and out.

Drivers must not:

- carry parcels or equipment on the bus, except for small hand-held luggage.

4.4.5. Route and scheduling

Drivers must:

- follow the approved designated school bus route and bus stops
- only divert from the approved bus route in emergencies and under direction from the Principal (or their delegate), with guidance from TSU and the Security and Emergency Management Unit (SEM)
- notify the Principal (or their delegate) immediately if the journey is delayed, cancelled, or the approved route is assessed as unsafe.

4.4.6. Student management and safety

Drivers must:

- complete a student roll or manifest for each journey as students board and leave the bus
- report any students not listed on the student roll or manifest to the Principal for approval
- follow any seat assignment instructions authorised by the Principal
- remind students to wear seatbelts and keep them fastened throughout the journey
- ensure students are seated while the vehicle is in motion
- conduct a post-journey check to ensure no student remains on the bus (refer to the [back of bus check section](#)).
- use discretion in emergencies but never leave students unsupervised
- report all hazards and incidents to the Principal immediately, including accidents, behaviour concerns, or vandalism.

Drivers must not:

- alter student seating plans without authorisation from the Principal (or their delegate)
- force students to wear seatbelts, and must report any non-compliance to the Principal
- remove students from the bus as a disciplinary action, or use any form of corporal punishment
- drop students off without a parent or caregiver present, unless prior written approval has been provided by the parents or caregivers to the Principal and noted on the student roll, manifest, or equivalent process.

4.4.7. Bus capacity and stranded students

Drivers must:

- allow any stranded student to board if it is safe and seating is available; even if they are not listed on the student roll or manifest, or do not have a local bus pass
- notify the Principal immediately and follow the local contingency plan if the school bus is over capacity to ensure no student is left behind or stranded
- contact the Principal if the designated staff member is not present to escort preschool or kindergarten students to the relevant location
- notify the Principal (or line manager for contract drivers) if school staff supervision is not present at school bus pick-up and drop-off points.

Drivers must not:

- leave preschool, kindergarten, or any students unattended at pick-up or drop-off points.

4.4.8. Administrative duties

Drivers must:

- provide, complete, and forward documentation (ED037 log sheets, School Bus Pre-Journey Check and Driver Declaration Book, and transport order forms) to the Principal in a timely manner.
- provide any additional documentation (such as student rolls or manifests) when requested by the Principal.

4.5. Back of bus check

At the end of each journey, drivers must ensure no child remains on the bus by:

- walking the full length of the bus, conducting a visual inspection including under each seat
- using any fitted equipment to confirm all passengers have disembarked
- referring to the student roll or manifest to confirm all passengers have disembarked.

4.6. Camp and excursion drivers

Principals must ensure that camp and excursion drivers meet the following criteria.

All school staff and non-staff volunteers with a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) who transport students in school transport vehicles for excursions (defined as any non-departmental bus route running on public roads) must possess:

- the appropriate class driver's licence
- a current MR713 medical clearance (valid for a up to 3 years, unless otherwise indicated by the examining practitioner)
- an up-to-date ED222 held on file by the Principal.

Additionally, all staff must be accompanied by another staff member or DHS cleared approved volunteer whilst driving with Department students on board

Approval to drive on excursion expires when either the MR713 medical clearance or driver's licence expires, whichever occurs first.

To transport students without another staff member or DHS-cleared volunteer present, the driver must hold full DIT Driver Accreditation. This applies to excursions and emergency relief situations where a department-approved yellow school bus driver is unavailable for regular morning or afternoon runs. Unaccredited emergency relief drivers cannot be paid or reimbursed by the department.

DIT's Accreditation and Licensing team can be [contacted for support](#).

For further information about camps and excursion please refer to the [camps and excursions policy \(PDF 665 KB\)](#).

4.7. Volunteer drivers

Principals must ensure that volunteer drivers satisfy the selection and approval criteria as listed above. They must also refer to the [volunteer policy \(PDF 196 KB\)](#).

4.8. Department-employed yellow school bus driver payments

Drivers of department-owned yellow school buses who drive morning and afternoon school bus routes are paid fortnightly. Payment is made after submitting a completed ED037: Bus Log sheet Running return for departmental school bus form or [online timesheet](#), approved by the Principal.

Payment is based on an approved route distance travelled daily, or duration of time worked daily, in accordance with the prescribed rates. Department-employed yellow school bus drivers are employed and paid under the SA Government Transport Workers Award. Drivers should refer to this award for employment conditions and payment rates.

If a department-owned yellow school bus breaks down during a journey, the driver is paid as per a normal run.

If the driver must remain with the bus beyond the normal run time due to the following situations, they must be paid hourly waiting time:

- bus breakdown
- accident
- flat tyre
- impassable roads
- emergency detour (due to bushfires or flooding, for example).

If a department employed yellow school bus driver presents for duty for a morning or afternoon bus route and the bus is immobile and the route will be cancelled without prior notice from the Principal, the driver will be paid for a normal run. This will be at the approved daily payment rate for the cancelled bus route.

Drivers must also be paid hourly waiting time when they are required to spend time cleaning the bus (see the 'cleaning buses' section in the [school bus management procedure \(PDF 654 KB\)](#) (staff login required)).

Drivers must not drive department-owned yellow school buses for personal use (between the school and home or for private use, for example).

Department-owned yellow school buses must be garaged at schools overnight and during the day, unless TSU approves an alternative location in writing for economic or safety reasons.

Where the department chooses to garage a bus away from the school, drivers are paid for using their private vehicles to travel between home and the bus terminus. Payments are made in the following circumstances:

- when a private vehicle is driven directly from the school to the bus terminus, to avoid the bus being 'double run' over the same route

- the driver is eligible to be paid mileage for the distance travelled from school to the terminus in the morning and from the terminus to the school in the afternoon
- where the distance between the driver's home and terminus is shorter than the distance from the school to the terminus, payment is based on the shorter distance
- when a driver drives a bus from the terminus to the school and uses a private vehicle to return to the terminus
 - payment for the private vehicle can be made and is based on the distance from the school to the terminus
 - where the distance between the school and the driver's home is shorter than the distance between the school and terminus, payment is based on the shorter distance.

To submit private motor vehicle claims, drivers must first complete an [ED008: Approval to use private motor vehicle on Government business form \(PDF 262 KB\)](#) (staff login required). The Principal must approve this form and record it on the Employee Information Kiosk.

Claims for private vehicle expenses must then be submitted by the driver to the Principal using an [ED623B: Claim for reimbursement of private motor vehicle expenses departmental bus driver use only \(DOCX 83KB\)](#). The form must be verified and signed by the Principal and forwarded to the TSU to process.

4.9. Complaints against department-employed yellow school bus drivers

Complaints made about department-employed bus drivers are managed in accordance with the [complaint management procedure \(PDF 199 KB\)](#) and [driver review procedure \(PDF 589 KB\)](#) (staff login required).

4.10. Complaints against contract-employed school bus drivers

To resolve any disputes, principals must work directly with the private transport service provider and the contract school bus driver, in accordance with the school bus services contract.

This also applies when private transport service providers do not adhere to contract provisions relating to their drivers.

If a driver issue cannot be resolved, or requires further investigation, principals should contact the Contracts Manager in TSU for assistance. Any investigation into a contract school bus driver may also involve the Incident Management Directorate (IMD).

After an investigation of incidents involving contract school bus drivers, and upon advice from TSU, principals have the right to revoke the driver's ED222 where justifiable.

4.11. Records management

All records relating to school transport services are to be retained and managed in accordance with the department's obligations under the *State Records Act 1997* (SA) and [information and records management policy \(PDF 139 KB\)](#).

For more information on retaining official records relating to school transport services please contact the [Information Management Team](#).

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. All department staff and volunteers

Comply with this procedure and associated policy and procedures.

5.2. Principals

Manage school transport services at the local level, including day-to-day management of drivers.

Manage any concerns raised by or about drivers.

5.3. Transport Services Unit (TSU)

Manage school transport services at the corporate level, including providing advice on applying this procedure, and associated policies and procedures.

Monitor, evaluate, and review this procedure.

6. Definitions

6.1. DIT

Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

6.2. department-employed yellow bus driver

Drivers who receive fare or reward for operating a departmental school bus service in the morning and afternoon

6.3. official record

A record made or received by an agency in the conduct of its business.

6.4. school transport service

A school service that:

- uses a school transport vehicle
- is provided to students or persons eligible to travel
- meets service viability criteria.

6.5. school transport vehicle

A vehicle that is a:

- bus provided by the department as a department-owned and operated school bus (not a bus that is owned by a school)
- bus operated by a third-party provider under a contract with the department (which may include a transport service for children and young people with a disability or those enrolled in the Intensive English Language Program)
- taxi or hire car.

6.6. transport assistance

Transport assistance can be:

- provision to travel on a school transport vehicle
- payment of a travelling allowance

6.7. unsealed road

A road which does not have a hard, smooth surface, like tarmac or concrete.

7. Supporting information

[Department for Infrastructure and Transport: Driver accreditation](#)

[Department for Infrastructure and Transport: Submit a certificate of fitness to drive](#)

[Working with Children Checks](#)

[ED222: Application for approval to drive a school bus form \(PDF 187 KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[ED623B: Claim for reimbursement of private motor vehicle expenses departmental bus driver use only \(DOCX 83KB\)](#)

[TSU010: Department school bus accident/injury report form \(DOC 154 KB\)](#)

[TSU011: Student roll/manifest for school bus \(DOCX 83 KB\)](#)

7.1. Related legislation

[Education and Children’s Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Children’s Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)

[Heavy Vehicle National Law \(South Australia\) Act 2013 \(SA\)](#)

[Motor Vehicles Act 1959 \(SA\)](#)

[Heavy Vehicle National Law and Regulations](#)

[Passenger Transport Act 1994 \(SA\)](#)

[Road Traffic Act 1961 \(SA\)](#)

[Road Traffic \(Road Rules—Ancillary and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2014 \(SA\)](#)

7.2. Related policies

[Camps and excursions policy \(PDF 665 KB\)](#)

[Closed-circuit television \(CCTV\) use on department school transport vehicles procedure \(PDF 604 KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Department for Infrastructure and Transport: Code of Practice for Buses](#)

[Department for Infrastructure and Transport: Heavy vehicle driver’s handbook SA](#)

[Driver review procedure \(PDF 589 KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Establishing or altering a school transport service procedure \(PDF 589 KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Safe transportation of children policy \(PDF 144 KB\)](#)

[Safe transportation of children procedure \(PDF 197 KB\)](#)

[School bus driver policy \(PDF 590 KB\)](#)

[School bus maintenance and safety policy \(PDF 580 KB\)](#)

[School bus maintenance and safety procedure \(PDF 649 KB\)](#)

[School bus management procedure \(PDF 654 KB\)](#)

[School bus travel procedure \(PDF 622 KB\)](#)

[School transport policy \(PDF 678 KB\)](#)

[Travelling and State Education Allowance procedure \(PDF 596 KB\)](#)

8. Record history

Published date: July 2025

8.1. Approvals

OP number: 339

File number: DE25/18840

Status: approved

Version: 1.0

Policy Officer: Bus Driver Liaison Officer, Transport Services Unit

Policy sponsor: Chief Procurement Officer

Responsible Executive Director: Chief Operating Officer

Approved by: Chief Operating Officer

Approved date: 24 July 2025

Next review date: 24 July 2028

8.2. Revision record

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Chief Operating Officer

Approved date: 24 July 2025

Review date: 24 July 2028

Amendment(s): New procedure.

9. Contact

Transport Services Unit

Email: education.TransportServices@sa.gov.au

Phone: 8226 3872