

# Safe transportation of children 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.

## Overview

This procedure outlines the Department for Education's (department) obligations under the [Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\) \(National Law\)](#) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 \(National Regulations\)](#) to ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of children when a service is transporting children.

Children are considered to be under the care of the education and care service at the point the service is taken to assume responsibility for their care and wellbeing, which means the point at which the child commences the journey on the transportation provided by, or arranged by, the education care service.

Compliance with this procedure enables the department's education and care services to comply with the requirements of the legislation. The department's education and care services that arrange or provide transportation, other than as part of an excursion, will need to ensure their risk assessment is current and the authorisation for transportation is obtained (using the templates provided).

## Scope

This procedure applies to education and care services that provide, or arrange, transportation of children between an education and care service premises and an alternate location. Transportation forms part of the education and care service if the service remains responsible for children during the period of transportation.

This procedure does not include requirements relating to excursions or regular outings. Excursions and regular outings are mandated by the [camps and excursions policy](#). For family day care excursions, refer to the [children's health and safety in family day care standard](#).

The responsibility for, and duty of care owed to, children applies in scenarios where the education and care service is transporting children, or has arranged for the transportation of children, between the education and care service premises and another location, for example their home, school. This includes when children are embarking and disembarking the means of transport and entering and exiting the service premises.

Examples of transport **not** forming part of an education and care service include:

- private transport provided by families and carers (ie carers not engaged by/registered with the education and care service)
- where transport is arranged by an approved provider other than the department (eg a long day care service dropping off or collecting children from a department preschool)
- where the department is providing or arranging a school bus to school students for the purposes of attending school, on which preschool children travel for the purpose of attending preschool. However, when approving preschool children to travel on a department school bus service,

principals are required to ensure an [authorisation for transportation in early childhood services \(DOCX 56KB\)](#) and the [risk assessment template – transporting children \(DOCX 83KB\)](#) are completed. Principals managing the relevant school bus service should discuss the request for a preschool child to travel on a school bus with the director of the early childhood service prior to approving, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. Refer to the [school transport policy](#).

This policy does not apply where children may be walking with educators outside of an education and care service premises. Other obligations that apply under the National Regulations when walking children are outlined in the [camps and excursions policy](#) and procedure (including for regular outings), such as the requirements to conduct risk assessments and obtain written authorisations.

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# Detail

The department's education and care services must meet the following requirements to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children when a service is transporting children or has arranged for the transportation of children.

## Notify the department of the provision of regular transportation

When arranging regular transportation (other than as part of an excursion) site leaders must notify [education.nqfenquiries@sa.gov.au](mailto:education.nqfenquiries@sa.gov.au) of the education and care service's intent to provide regular transportation, and again when the arrangements are discontinued. This requirement does not apply to family day care services.

## Embarking and disembarking a vehicle at the education and care service

Transportation can present heightened risks to the safety of children often during the period of movement between a vehicle and an education and care service or other location. It is important that active supervision of children embarking and disembarking a vehicle at the education and care service is maintained at all times, including to ensure that no children are left inside a vehicle.

A staff member or nominated supervisor of the service (other than the driver), must be present when children embark and disembark from a vehicle at the education and care service. It is a requirement that education and care services (excluding family day care services) maintain accurate and immediate records to account for children embarking and disembarking from a vehicle during regular transportation to and from an education and care service. Refer to records section for a 'regular transportation record' template.

## Risk assessments for transportation

Risk assessments must identify and assess risks that the transportation of a child may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of the child, and must specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised. Risks should be evaluated, and a risk assessment undertaken by the site leader or educator prior to each time children are transported, unless the transportation is 'regular transportation'. The National Regulations also require that the completed risk assessment be available upon request for inspection.

The education and care service to ensure risk assessment is completed using [risk assessment template – transporting children \(DOCX 83KB\)](#) template. For family day care, refer to the safe transportation of children risk benefit assessment template on the [FDC educator portal](#).

Note: for excursions the [risk management plan for sports, adventure, camps and excursions \(DOCX 2,181KB\)](#) should be used. For family day care, the risk benefit assessments for routine and non-routine excursions should be used.

If the transportation is 'regular transportation', a risk assessment is not required if one has been conducted for the regular transportation of the child within the previous 12 months. Regular transportation, means the transportation by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by this service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are

substantially the same for each occasion on which the child is transported (eg circumstances that are **NOT** substantially the same might be when the means of transport, the transportation route or destination(s) have altered, the period of time during which the child is transported changes, or the provider of the transportation service has changed).

The [risk assessment template – transporting children \(DOCX 83KB\)](#) or [safe transportation of children risk benefit assessment](#) must be used when assessing risks to ensure the following minimum criteria of the National Regulations are met:

- the proposed route and duration of the transportation
- the proposed pick-up location and destination
- the means of transport
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints
- any water hazards
- the procedure for embarking and disembarking the vehicle, including:
  - ensuring a staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) is present at the service to account for all children as they embark and disembark at the service premises
  - how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking
  - the process to check of the interior of the vehicle to ensure no children are left behind
  - the process to record how each child was accounted for at the service premises
- the number of adults and children involved in the transportation to provide active supervision
- given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide active supervision including whether any adults with specialised qualifications are required to meet educator to child ratios and first aid requirements
- whether any items should be readily available during transportation (for example, a mobile phone and list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported)
- the process for entering and leaving:
  - the education and care service premises and
  - any vehicle (if applicable) and
  - the pick-up location or destination (as required).

The risk assessment should also consider risk mitigation if there is no parent or authorised person (adult aged 18 years or older) at home when returning the child to the address on the written authorisation, to ensure the child is not left without adequate supervision.

## Authorisations for transportation

Written authorisation for a child to be transported must be given prior to transportation, and by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority, given by a parent, to authorise transportation of a child. Site leaders and educators must ensure written authorisation is obtained prior to transportation and as required by the National Regulations, ensure that written authorisations are available upon request for inspection.

The education and care service is to ensure authorisation for transportation is completed using [authorisation for transportation of children in education and care services \(DOCX 56KB\)](#) template. For family day care refer to the transportation permission form on the [educator portal](#). If a request is made by a parent or other

authorised person to transport the child to an address other than the address on the written authorisation, a new authorisation and risk assessment must be completed.

This procedure does not include requirements relating to excursions or regular outings. Excursions and regular outings are mandated by the [camps and excursions policy](#). For family day care, refer to the [children's health and safety in family day care standard](#). For excursion authorisation the [parental consent for camp, excursion, sporting or adventure activity \(ED170\) \(DOC 146KB\)](#) should be used. For family day care, refer to the routine and non-routine excursion permission forms in the [educator portal](#).

The [authorisation for transportation of children in education and care services \(DOCX 56KB\)](#) be used when acquiring authorisation to ensure the following requirements under the National Regulations are met:

- the child's name
- the reason the child is to be transported
- if the authorisation is for regular transportation, a description of when the child is to be transported eg Monday to Friday, or every Tuesday
- if the authorisation is not for regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported eg 25/06/2021
- a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination
- the means of transport to be used
- any requirement for seatbelts or safety restraints
- the period of time during which the child is to be transported
- the anticipated number of children likely to be transported
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation
- that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the education and care service
- that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the education and care service.

If the transportation is 'regular transportation', the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12-month period. A new written authorisation must be obtained when changes in the circumstances of transportation highlight new or additional risks that may affect the safety, health and wellbeing of children being transported, and a new risk assessment has been completed.

## Records

The site leader must ensure that a [daily regular transportation record \(DOCX 56KB\)](#) is kept to account for children's movements on and off a bus or vehicle to ensure that children move and arrive safely.

A record must be completed by a staff member or nominated supervisor (a person other than the driver) immediately after children embark and disembark from a vehicle at the education and care service. The record must include:

- the full name and signature of the staff member or nominated supervisor who accounted for the children and
- the time and date the record was made.

The record must confirm that:

- each individual child was accounted for during embarking and disembarking of the vehicle at the service premises

- each child was accounted for at the service premises
- a visually inspection of the interior of the vehicle was completed to ensure that no children remain inside the vehicle.

Records must be kept in accordance with the department’s records management policy and procedure and can only be destroyed in accordance with current approved records disposal schedules issued by [State Records of South Australia](#).

## Local procedure

Education and care services providing or arranging for the transportation of children must ensure that a local (site) specific safe transportation procedure is developed that takes into account their specific context, and to ensure relevant departmental policies and procedures are implemented. This does not apply to family day care services.

The local procedure must consider:

- ensuring active and adequate supervision of children is maintained at all times during transportation, based on the risk assessment.

Factors to be considered include: the requirements of individual children and how educators will support children requiring additional support (including medication, health plans and risk assessments for individual children); educator to child ratios (noting that the bus driver must not be included); age and level of development of children; the number and positioning of educators to ensure visibility and accessibility to children; risks associated with the mode of transport, environment, location or route; the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator; and children’s abilities to walk/transition safely to and from vehicles.

- the process for entering and exiting the premises and how each child is accounted for.  
This must include ensuring that a parent/authorised person signs the daily attendance record at the point of collection and delivery of the child; records are cross referenced with the service attendance records before and after each bus run and attached to the services attendance sheet for storage; and the supervising educator on the bus and driver sign the bus attendance records.
- the process for embarking and disembarking the vehicle and how each child is accounted for including the requirement to have a staff member (other than the driver) who is responsible for safely managing children’s movements on and off the vehicle. This must include ensuring children’s ability to walk safely/transition to and from vehicles and any staffing implications is assessed; a head count occurs each time children embark and disembark the vehicle checked against the attendance record; the supervising educator and driver check that all children have exited the bus at the end of the bus run by walking the length of the bus and conducting a visual inspection, including checking under seats, and each signing the bus attendance record confirming the date and time that the bus has been checked; the driver repeats this check when the bus is parked at its final location; and a mitigation strategy if no parent/ authorised nominee is present at the address of disembarking.
- incorporating an emergency management and contingency plans eg steps taken to immediately follow up any children unaccounted for, to respond to a vehicle accident or breakdown, or staff or child illness and bushfires (where relevant). This must include information and equipment required in the case of an emergency, such as emergency contacts for each child.
- ensuring first aid requirements are met during transportation: the minimum requirement is for one first aider, who holds the qualifications required under the National Regulations (refer to [first](#)

[aid in schools and preschools](#)) to be in attendance, noting that the number of designated first aiders required must be based on the risk assessment.

- ensuring educators and children follow the service’s behaviour guidance procedure during transportation.
- ensuring the bus/vehicle’s inspections and maintenance procedures are followed. Refer to the [school transport policy](#) and the [Code of Practice for Buses \(PDF 1,533KB\)](#), or contact the Transport Services Unit at [education.transportservices@sa.gov.au](mailto:education.transportservices@sa.gov.au) or 8226 3872.
- ensuring the selection criteria for bus drivers in accordance with the [school transport policy](#) is met.
- addressing how the service will consult with and inform families, of the safe transportation policy and procedure, and ensuring it can be readily accessed at the service.
- ensuring an induction process for all staff (including relief staff) outlining roles and responsibilities.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Early childhood service leaders

Provide ongoing monitoring of their compliance with this procedure.

Make sure risks to the department regarding its compliance with this procedure are identified and addressed.

### Line manager

Make sure staff follow all requirements.

### Employees

Comply with this procedure’s obligations.

### Family day care staff

Make sure family day care educators follow all requirements.

### Family day care educator

Comply with this procedure’s obligations.

### Early Childhood Services and Strategy

Monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in accordance with the department’s operational policy framework requirements.



# Definitions

## education and care service

'Education and Care Service' has a consistent meaning with that set out in the Education and Care Services National Law and includes the following education and care services provided by the department:

- preschools unless:
  - the program is delivered in a class or classes where a full-time education program is also being delivered to school children; and
  - the program is being delivered to fewer than 6 children in the school
- services in children's centres where the department is the approved provider
- department funded occasional care services
- rural care program
- department funded play centres
- family day care
- disability services.

## regular transportation

Regular transportation, means the transportation by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by this service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same for each occasion on which the child is transported (eg circumstances that are NOT substantially the same might be when the means of transport, the transportation route or destination(s) have altered, the period of time during which the child is transported changes, or the provider of the transportation service has changed).

## regular outing

Means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program, and where the circumstances relevant of the risk assessment are substantially the same on each outing.

## Supporting information

[Authorisation form for transportation of children in early childhood education and care services \(DOCX 56KB\)](#)

[Family day care educator portal – forms](#)

[Preschool policy compliance – self-assessment resource \(PDF 510KB\)](#)

[Risk assessment template – transporting children \(DOCX 83KB\)](#)

[Safe transportation of children \(ACECQA\) \(PDF 189KB\)](#)

[Safe transportation of children policy guidelines \(ACECQA\) \(PDF 522KB\)](#)

[Guidance for adequate supervision during transportation \(ACECQA\) \(PDF 252KB\)](#)

[Safe Transportation of Children Safety Checklist and regular transportation record form \(ACECQA\) \(PDF 284KB\)](#)

[Minimising the risk of children being left behind in vehicles \(ACECQA\) \(PDF 1,993KB\)](#)

[Managing records](#)

## Related legislation

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011, Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\)](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

## Related policies

[Camps and excursions policy](#)

[Camps and excursions procedure](#)

[Children's health and safety in family day care standard](#)

[Safe transportation of children policy \(PDF 216KB\)](#)

[School transport policy](#)

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## Contact

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