

PARENT FACT SHEET #1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Assisted School Travel Program



Parents play an important role in supporting the safe travel needs of their child to and from school.

Assisted School Travel Program

All families are responsible for the transport of their children to and from school. Families who have a child with a disability may be eligible for transport through the Assisted School Travel Program (ASTP).

The program supports those eligible students who need transport assistance in order to attend school where it is necessitated by the nature of the student's disability and the circumstances of the family.

Families and schools need to assess a student's travel support needs and explore the suitability of all forms of travel to and from school including the [School Student Transport Scheme](#) and the [Private Vehicle Conveyance Subsidy](#). Both schemes are managed by [Transport for NSW](#). Your child's school will provide information for you on these schemes.

Eligibility criteria for ASTP

To be eligible to apply for ASTP a student must be:

- assessed as having an identified disability according to the Department of Education and Communities' *Disability Criteria May 2003* **and**
- a NSW resident and enrolled in the closest appropriate NSW government or non-government school **and**
- enrolled in a special school or support class or an early intervention program or require high level assistance for mobility purposes if enrolled in mainstream **and**
- assessed as unable to travel independently.

In addition, a student must have parents¹ who are unable to provide transport to and from school either fully or in part.

How do I apply for ASTP?

Complete Part A of the [Application for Assisted School Travel](#) form which is available from the ASTP website www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/astp/index.php and submit it to the school when completed. Schools then complete Part B.

If you are unable to transport your child to and from school, supporting documentation may be required and should accompany the application.

Who approves applications and organises ASTP?

The school lodges your application for assessment and processing by ASTP. Where possible, ASTP will do this within seven working days and you will be advised in writing of the outcome.

If travel is approved, ASTP will organise the transport arrangements for your child. Before transport commences the contractor/driver will contact you regarding pick up and drop off times to and from your child's school.

¹ Reference in this document to "parent" includes a guardian, carer or other person having the parental responsibility or care of the student



What happens if I move?

Inform the school. The school will complete a [Variation to Approved Travel Arrangements](#) form where there is a change of residential address, a change to school attendance times or a request for transport to respite services.

Variations may be permanent or temporary. For permanent variations Part A of the [Application for Assisted School Travel](#) is also completed by parents. Requests for temporary variations can only be supported if there is an existing transport service available. Your school will advise if any additional information is needed.

What additional supports are available?

Sometimes a child's travel support needs change. The school, in consultation with you, will complete a [Change Request](#) form when this occurs.

An Assisted Travel Support Officer (ATSO) can be requested for students with additional needs due to behavioural and/or medical issues. ATSOs provide a high level of supervision during travel.

Parents and schools should ensure that ATSOs and drivers are made aware of a child's specific needs for travel. ATSOs will follow strategies listed in the child's travel support plan developed by the school. If a child requires an ATSO, transport cannot commence unless an ATSO is present in the vehicle.

Please note that ATSOs and drivers are not allowed to administer medication without the authorisation of ASTP.

What are my responsibilities as a parent?

Parents play an important role in supporting the safe travel needs of their child to and from school. To assist parents are responsible for:

- providing accurate information to the school in the application process
- ensuring your child is ready to meet the transport at the specified time and place
- being present to meet the vehicle at the pick-up/drop-off point 15 minutes either side of the arranged time
- assisting or lifting your child in and out of the vehicle. Drivers may assist with wheelchairs
- ensuring your child is safely seated with seatbelts fastened and all loose equipment stored away
- providing appropriate seating and other equipment as specified in the child's travel plan (no food or drink to be consumed in vehicle without authorisation of ASTP)
- notifying the contractor/driver if your child is not attending school on a particular day
- notifying the school and ASTP if your circumstances change or if you have any concerns about transport.

ASTP responsibilities - screening of travel staff

All drivers and ATSOs undergo screening to meet child protection requirements. Runs are required to have relief drivers/ATSOs to cover absences. All drivers/ATSOs are also screened prior to employment.

Please ask to see identification if you have any concerns about the identity of unfamiliar travel staff. All vehicles contracted for the ASTP must meet safety standards set by Transport for NSW Roads and Maritime Services.

What can I do if my application for ASTP services is not approved?

Contact the school in the first instance to discuss the reasons as to why your application was not approved. Schools and parents can then seek advice from ASTP. Parents may lodge an appeal to ASTP using the [Appeals Panel Request](#) form. Additional supporting information should be sent along with this form. The Appeals Panel meets once a month and you will be advised in writing of the appeal outcome.

Where can I find further information?

The ASTP website contains information about the program, the eligibility criteria, how to apply and all the necessary forms

— <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/astp/>

If you have any questions or concerns relating to applications, ATSOs, drivers or travel arrangements for your child, please contact your school or ASTP staff for assistance Monday to Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm on **1300 338 278** or email **ASTP** at parents.astp@det.nsw.edu.au

Further Information

Assisted School Travel Program
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Wollongong East
NSW 2520

generalenquiries.astp@det.nsw.edu.au

1300 338 278

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/student-support/programs/astp/

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