



# School bus FAQs for parents, carers and students

## What is the School Student Transport Scheme?

The School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) provides eligible school students with free or subsidised travel between home and school on metro, train, bus, ferry, light rail and long-distance coach services.

The type of school travel assistance available depends on where you live and the availability of public transport.

Visit the '**School student travel**' page for an overview of the different types of school travel assistance.

Go to **transportnsw.info** and search 'school student travel'.

## How do I apply for a School Opal card or school travel pass?

Visit the 'Apply for a school travel pass or School Opal card' page for eligibility criteria and application instructions.

Go to **transportnsw.info** and search 'school pass opal apply'.

## What is a School Term Bus Pass?

If a student isn't eligible for free school travel, they may be able to buy a School Term Bus Pass for discounted travel between home and school by bus.

For more information, visit the 'School Term Bus Pass' page.

Go to **transportnsw.info** and search 'school term bus pass'.

## What is the Assisted School Travel Program?

The Assisted School Travel Program (ASTP) helps eligible students with disability by providing free specialised transport to and from school when parents or carers can't provide or arrange it.

To check eligibility, go to **education.nsw.gov.au** and search 'ASTP eligibility'.

To apply, first confirm eligibility, then complete the ASTP application form.

Go to **education.nsw.gov.au** and search 'ASTP application'.

Email the completed form to: **generalenquiries.astp@det.nsw.edu.au**

## What is the School Drive Subsidy?

If public transport is not available, this subsidy helps cover the cost of driving students to school or to the nearest transport pick-up point by car, motorcycle or boat.

Visit the 'Apply for the School Drive Subsidy' page for eligibility criteria and how to apply.

Go to **transportnsw.info** and search 'school drive subsidy'.

## Why is it important to tap on and tap off?

Using a School Opal card correctly by tapping on and tapping off is a condition of travel under the SSTS. Not tapping can result in penalties or losing access to free travel.

Tap on and tap off data also helps Transport for NSW and operators understand how many students use each service. If students don't tap, services may appear underused, which can lead to cuts or cancellations.

Tapping on and tapping off helps to:

- confirm your travel is valid
- track student journeys accurately
- ensure enough buses run during school peak times
- prevent service reductions or overcrowding
- maintain reliable services now and in the future



## Can students use free travel for extracurricular activities or off-campus study?

No. Free travel under the School Student Transport Scheme only covers trips between a student's home and their enrolled school campus on school days.

If travel is outside standard school hours, or for activities like TAFE or off-campus programs, students must pay a fare and use a valid ticket.

## What resources help students learn to catch a bus?

Transport for NSW has created **A guide to travelling on the bus network**. It includes:

- how to plan a trip
- how to pay for travel
- tips for a smoother journey

Go to [transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info) and search 'bus network guide'.

## What are informal school bus stops?

Informal bus stops are not signposted and are usually found in rural areas. They may be at the front of a property or by the roadside.

Drivers may find it hard to see children at informal stops. Slow down to 40 km/h when bus lights flash, watch for children crossing the road, and be aware that parked buses can block your view.

## Parents and carers:

if your child needs to use an informal stop, check that it is:

- away from traffic
- clearly visible in both directions
- in a location where buses can stop safely
- near a place where you can park and wait

To find out more, speak to your bus operator or visit the **'Safety around schools'** page.

Go to [transport.nsw.gov.au](https://transport.nsw.gov.au) and search 'safety around school'.

## What does a dedicated school service mean?

Dedicated school services are timetabled to suit student travel needs, but are still open to all fare-paying passengers. These services are part of the public transport network.

To reduce confusion, Transport for NSW is beginning to refer to them as **supplementary school services**.

## Why don't fare-paying passengers on school services need a Working with Children Check?

All bus services are part of the public transport network and are open to all fare-paying passengers.

Fare-paying passengers do not need a WWCC because they do not have responsibility for children on these services and are not considered to be doing child-related work.

A WWCC is required for people who work or volunteer in child-related roles in NSW. This is set out in the **Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012**.

## What is the driver's duty of care once students have exited the bus?

Drivers do have a responsibility to ensure all students have safely exited the bus before end of shift. They are responsible for driving safely and making sure the doors are closed before the bus moves.

For more details, see the **Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017**.

Go to [legislation.nsw.gov.au](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au) and search 'division 3 drivers of buses'.

## Is Transport for NSW making changes to school transport?

Yes. Transport for NSW is reviewing how school transport is planned and delivered, based on recommendations from the NSW Bus Industry Taskforce Review.

This includes a review of school transport policy and planning guidelines.





### Are students who live interstate eligible for free travel if enrolled at a NSW school?

No. Students who live outside NSW cannot access free travel under the School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS).

They may be able to travel as fare-paying passengers if there is space on an existing service.

To qualify for SSTS, a student must:

- live in NSW
- be enrolled at an approved school
- meet all other eligibility requirements

Visit the 'Apply for a school travel pass or School Opal card' page for full details.

Go to [transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info) and search 'school pass opal apply'.

### Where can I find information on bus timetables and routes?

Use the Trip Planner at [transportnsw.info/trip](https://transportnsw.info/trip) to plan your journey.

To include dedicated school services in your options, click 'Refine' and select 'School bus'.

### What are the school bus safety guidelines?

Transport for NSW has developed safety guidelines for travelling to school by walking, bike riding, scootering or using a school bus.

For more information, visit the 'Safety around schools' page.

Go to [transport.nsw.gov.au](https://transport.nsw.gov.au) and search 'safety around school'.

### How should students behave on public transport?

Students should be respectful and responsible when travelling on buses.

Transport has created guidelines and a code of conduct to help keep students, other passengers, road users and bus drivers safe.

Students must follow:

- the 'Guidelines for managing school student behaviour on buses'
- Go to [transport.nsw.gov.au](https://transport.nsw.gov.au) and search 'guidelines for managing'. the 'Student Code of Conduct'
- Go to [transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info) and search 'student code'.

### Who do I contact if there's a safety concern on a bus?

- For general concerns, fill out the form on the bus feedback page [transportnsw.info/contact-us/feedback/bus-feedback](https://transportnsw.info/contact-us/feedback/bus-feedback)
- For serious issues like antisocial behaviour or unattended bags, alert staff, or in emergencies call **Triple Zero (000)**
- For national security concerns, call the National Security Hotline on **1800 123 400**
- To report a major road incident or hazard, call **131 700**

### Who do I contact if there's an issue with a school crossing supervisor?

Speak to your school principal to raise any concerns.

### Who do I contact to report lost property on a bus?

Complete the lost property form.

Go to [transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info) and search 'lost property'.

You can also contact your bus operator as the lost item may have returned to the depot.

## How do I replace a lost School Opal card or school travel pass?

If your School Opal card is lost, damaged or stolen, you can apply for a replacement — if the student is still eligible.

Once you apply, the original card is cancelled and a new one is sent within **8–10 working days**. There's a **\$10 replacement fee**, and students must use a valid ticket while waiting for their new card.

Visit the '**Replace your School Opal card or travel pass**' page for details.

Go to [transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info) and search 'school opal replace'.

## Where can I find information about walking and cycling to school?

Walking and cycling are the most sustainable ways to get to school. They reduce traffic congestion and improve community health.

Active transport can be a convenient way to connect with the public transport network. You can use the Trip Planner or Opal Travel app to see how you can walk or cycle to your nearest public transport stop.

