



# The A-Z of school bus travel

## Introduction

If you're a secondary student, parent or carer this guide will help make the school bus ride a safe, reliable and familiar part of your daily routine.

Learn how to plan the route, travel safely and confidently, and understand passes and ticketing rules.

## Planning your trip

Use the Trip Planner to find active and public transport trip options, including school bus services, to get to and from school. You can confirm route numbers, stop locations and departure times.

- Enter your location in the 'From' field, such as your home address or local stop
- Enter the destination in the 'To' field, such as the school name
- Set the date and time of travel, e.g. arrive by 9.00am
- To include school bus services in your results, click Refine and select school buses. You can also filter out all other transport options by unticking the checkboxes for the other transport modes.

You can favourite your school bus route, check live departure time, track bus location, and receive service updates to stay informed, all in once place with the Opal Travel app.



Plan your trip at  
[transportnsw.info](https://transportnsw.info)

Some routes may not appear on the Trip Planner or Opal Travel app. To learn more, contact your local bus operator directly using the contact details at [transportnsw.info/operators](https://transportnsw.info/operators)

You can also ask your school if they have local transport maps or other useful information.

### Real-time updates

All public buses across NSW now have real-time information available. Use the Trip Planner, Opal Travel app or other transport apps (such as AnyTrip, TripView or NextThere) to stay informed about whether services are running on time for peace of mind.

### The role of school bus services

All bus services are part of the public transport network and are open to all fare-paying passengers. School services are in place to transport school students at specific, high-demand times.

## Travelling safely to school and back on the bus

### Getting to the bus stop

Parents or carers are responsible for getting children to and from the bus stop safely. Until your child is at least 8 years old, hold their hand when out walking. Then up until they are at least 10 years old, supervise your child closely and hold their hand when crossing the road.

### At the bus stop

- Know the stand number, especially at larger interchanges.
- Have the School Opal card ready.
- Stay alert and stand back from the kerb.
- Keep an eye out for the bus by checking the route number and destination on the display panel above the windscreen.
- When the correct bus arrives, signal clearly and board only after it has stopped.

### On the bus

- Your child must tap on as they board.
- Encourage your child to take a seat quickly and wear a seatbelt if the bus is fitted with them. If standing, hold on firmly and stay alert.
- Keep aisles, floor space and seats clear of bags and other items.



- Follow driver instructions, be courteous and keep noise to a reasonable level.
- Priority seating is for those who need it most, including people with disability or injury, older people, and those who are pregnant.

### Getting off the bus

- Meet your child on the same side of the road as the bus. Never wait on the opposite side of the road and call them across.
- Talk with your child about what to do if you're delayed, they catch the wrong bus or get off at the wrong stop.
- Remind your child to press the stop button ahead of their stop.
- Stay seated until the bus stops completely.
- Your child must tap off before leaving.
- Cross the road only when it's safe. Wait until the bus has left and then use a safe place to cross, such as pedestrian 'zebra' crossing or traffic lights. If these aren't available, cross the road at a location which has a good line of sight in both directions and look left and right continuously as you cross.

### Our bus drivers

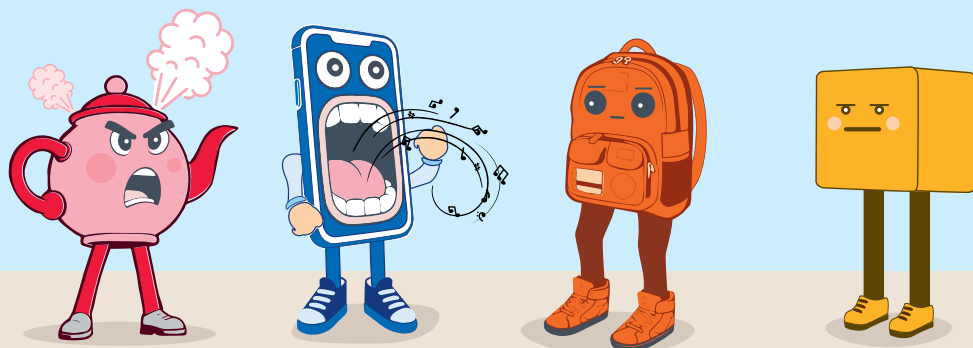
While bus drivers need a Working with Children Check, there are no specific requirements for a driver to offer duty of care outside of taking reasonable precautions to avoid harm.

The driver's responsibility is to operate the bus in a safe manner, including ensuring the door is closed before the vehicle moves.

To report general concerns with bus services, contact the bus operator or fill out the form on the bus feedback webpage at [feedback.transportnsw.info](https://feedback.transportnsw.info)



**STOP!** One step back from the kerb  
**LOOK!** Continuously both ways  
**LISTEN!** For the sounds of approaching traffic  
**THINK!** Whether it's safe to cross



## Behaviour on the bus

Public transport is a shared space. Everyone deserves a safe and comfortable journey. We all play a role in making bus travel a positive experience. That means showing respect, following instructions and looking out for one another.

### **The Creatures of Transport help remind us of what not to do:**

#### **The Space Hog**

This creature forgets that seats are for people, not bags. Don't be a Space Hog. Keep your bag on your lap or the floor and leave seats free.

#### **The Noise Machine**

This creature talks loudly and blasts music. Don't be a Noise Machine. Keep your voice down and use headphones.

#### **The Blocker**

This one stands at the front of the bus or blocks the aisle. Don't be a Blocker. Move down the aisle and keep the doorway clear.

## **The Hot Head**

Quick to anger, this creature takes frustration out on others. Don't be a Hot Head. Stay calm and patient.

## Types of travel passes

### **School Opal cards and school travel passes**

School Opal cards and school travel passes allow free travel on school days between home and school for eligible students.

Child/Youth Opal cards need to be used when not travelling on school days or outside of school. This card is for children aged 4–15 and full-time NSW/ACT high school students aged 16 and older who have a Transport Concession Entitlement Card issued by their school. Concession fares apply.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for a School Opal card or school travel pass, the student must be a resident of NSW or an overseas student eligible for free government

education. They must be aged 4 years and 6 months or older. Eligibility also changes depending on how far the student lives from their school:

- Years K–2 (Infants)  
No minimum distance
- Years 3–6 (Primary)  
More than 1.6km straight line distance or at least 2.3km walking
- Years 7–12 (Secondary)  
More than 2.0km straight line distance or at least 2.9km walking
- Pre-school children are not eligible.

## How to apply for School Opal cards and school travel passes

Applications open at the start of Term 4 for the following year. Visit [transportnsw.info/school-students](https://transportnsw.info/school-students) to apply.

Once endorsed by the school, your School Opal card will be sent to your home.

In areas outside of the Opal network, check with your bus operator to find out how and when school travel passes are issued.

## When to apply

Eligible Opal cards are automatically updated for the new school year, so you'll only need to apply if you're:

- Applying for a School Opal card or school travel pass for the first time.
- Changing name, school and/or address, or

- Requesting an additional residence as a result of a new shared parental responsibility situation.

In shared parental situations, only ONE School Opal card is issued and the additional residence is added to the existing card. The second address still needs to meet the eligibility criteria.

## What if my child isn't eligible for free travel?

If your child isn't eligible for free travel, you may be able to buy a School Term Bus Pass. Visit [transportnsw.info/school-students](https://transportnsw.info/school-students) for more information and to apply.

## Using the School Opal card

- Valid for travel from 6:30am–7:00pm on school days between home and school.
- They work on bus, metro, train, ferry and light rail services – whichever modes of transport and transport operators that were selected in the application process.
- Your child needs to tap on and tap off with their Opal card every time they use the bus. Cards are personal and cannot be shared.



## Replacing a lost or damaged card

- Report it at [transportnsw.info/help-contact/report-lost-property](https://transportnsw.info/help-contact/report-lost-property).
- The lost or damaged card is cancelled immediately.
- A small replacement fee applies.
- The new card will arrive in 8–10 working days.
- Students must travel with a valid Child/Youth Opal card or ticket while waiting for replacement.

## Assistance for students with a disability

Students with a disability who are unable to travel to and from school under the School Student Transport Scheme may be eligible for assistance under the Department of Education Assisted School Travel Program (ASTP). Check eligibility at [education.nsw.gov.au](https://education.nsw.gov.au)

## Student Code of Conduct

There is a clear Student Code of Conduct for public transport. Talk to your child about these expectations.

### On the bus

- Use polite language. No swearing or offensive words.
- No fighting, spitting, bullying or throwing objects.
- Keep feet off seats and avoid loud music.
- Offer seats to those in need.
- Follow driver instructions.
- Keep aisles clear and stay seated when possible.
- Wear seatbelts if available.
- Respect the bus and its equipment. Vandalism is a crime.
- No eating or drinking, except for water or for medical reasons.

### At the stop / boarding

- Wait quietly and safely away from the road.
- Board in a single line after others have exited.
- Cross the road only when safe and use crossings where possible.

Disobeying these rules may result in the withdrawal of School Opal cards or school travel passes, a ban from public transport or police involvement. Parents or carers will also be contacted and can request a review of any decision.

## Fare compliance

Even if travel is free, students must tap on and tap off with their School Opal card.

This helps Transport monitor demand, prevent overcrowding and avoid service reductions due to underreported use.

Not tapping on may result in refused travel or penalties. Students must be able to show a valid ticket or proof of concession at all times. A ticket is only considered valid once tapped on.

Full-time school students aged 16+ must carry and present a valid Transport Concession Entitlement Card when using concession fares. Contact your school to apply.

## Lost property

Visit [transportnsw.info/lost-property](https://transportnsw.info/lost-property) to report lost items. Include a clear description of the item, and information about when and where the item was lost. You can also contact your bus operator as the lost item may have returned to the depot.

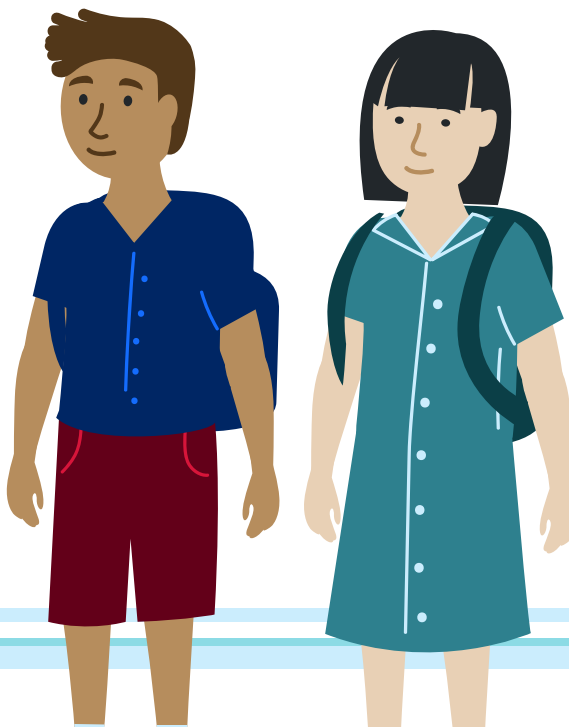
When reporting lost property, you'll receive a tracking number. If the item isn't located within 28 days, the case will be closed.



## Active transport

Walking and bike riding, known as active transport, are the most sustainable ways to travel, benefitting communities by reducing car usage and traffic congestion and promoting better 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.



## Key contacts and resources

Check eligibility, apply for a pass or  
find out more about school travel:  
[transportnsw.info/school-students](https://transportnsw.info/school-students)

Find a local bus operator:  
[transportnsw.info/operators](https://transportnsw.info/operators)

Report lost property: [transportnsw.info/lost-property](https://transportnsw.info/lost-property) or call **131 500**

Report an emergency situation: call  
**000** in an emergency

School road safety guidelines: Visit  
[transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/  
community/schools](https://transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/community/schools)

Bus safety around schools: Visit  
[transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/  
road-users/drivers/be-bus-aware](https://transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/road-users/drivers/be-bus-aware)

Report a hazard or road incident:  
call **131 700**

Provide feedback: [transportnsw.info/  
contact-us/feedback/bus-feedback](https://transportnsw.info/contact-us/feedback/bus-feedback)

