Non-State Schools
Transport Assistance Scheme

CATHOLIC EDUCATION QUEENSLAND

Independent Schools Queensland
choice & diversity

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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ABBREVIATIONS

BFAP	Bus Fare Assistance Program
CEQL	Catholic Education Queensland Limited
FFPOS	Full Fee Paying Overseas Student
ISQ	Independent Schools Queensland
NCCD	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability
NSSTAS	Non-State Schools Transport Assistance Scheme
PLP	Personalised Learning Plan
QED	Department of Education
STMCFS	School Transport Maximum Cash Fare Schedule
SWD	Students with Disability Travel Assistance Program
TCR	Travel Capability Rating
TMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads

1 INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Government considers families have the prime responsibility for making suitable travel arrangements for their students to attend school. Since 1997 the Queensland Government has provided funding to enable the non-state school sector to administer a transport assistance scheme for students attending non-state schools.

The Scheme is known as the Non-State Schools Transport Assistance Scheme (NSSTAS). It is a joint initiative of the Catholic Education Queensland Limited (CEQL) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ). The Scheme is administered by CEQL on behalf of all non-state schools.

The NSSTAS consists of two programs:

- Bus Fare Assistance Program (BFAP), and
- Students With Disability Transport Assistance Program (SWD).

These guidelines address the Students With Disability Transport Assistance Program.

2 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

The purpose of the Students With Disability Travel Assistance Program is to provide financial support to families of those students whose disability necessitates transport assistance to and from a non-state school by a means that takes into account their disability.

To qualify for travel assistance students must have transport needs, assessed by the school, that are demonstrably different to those of their typically developing same age peers by reason of their disability.

Funds are limited and the level of assistance provided to eligible applicants will depend on the program funds available in the relevant semester.

3 ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

3.1 FOR APPLICANTS

Applications for assistance will normally be accepted only from a parent or carer of eligible students. A family for the purposes of this Scheme is defined as: *A student or cluster of students at one address under the care of a responsible applicant.* In exceptional circumstances applications may be accepted from charitable organisations or government agencies acting on behalf of a student.

In special circumstances, some schools may elect to assist parents with the cost of fares by paying a proportion of the fares to the transport provider on behalf of the parent. These arrangements are at the discretion of the school principal.

Parents with shared custody arrangements are encouraged to liaise with each other to lodge only one application for the parent who drives the student concerned. Alternatively, the application has the provision at "Full Weeks Not Travelling?" to notify when the student was not residing at a particular address.

3.2 FOR STUDENTS

To be **eligible** for travel assistance a student must:

- reside in Queensland,
- attend an accredited non-state school in Queensland,
- be eligible to attract the Australian Government General Recurrent Grant for the school attended,
- be recorded in the latest submission of the Australian Government's Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) as receiving supplementary, substantial or extensive adjustments to address the functional impact of an NCCD category of disability: cognitive, physical, sensory or social/emotional; or
    - is a Prep or new student (if not included in the latest Commonwealth census for the NCCD) with evidence of a diagnosed disability and where the school has confirmed by the end of Term 1 that adjustments provided are consistent with the descriptors of either supplementary, substantial or extensive in the NCCD Guidelines:
        - **Supplementary:** Student receives adjustments supplementary to the strategies and resources already available for all students within the school for particular activities *at specific times throughout the week.*
        - **Substantial:** Student has substantial support needs and receives essential adjustments and requires considerable assistance to the usual educational program *at most times, on most days.*
        - **Extensive:** Student has very high support needs and is provided with extensive targeted measures and sustained levels of intensive support *at all times.*
- have a Personalised Learning Plan or equivalent (PLP) which confirms transport needs, assessed by the school, that are demonstrably different to those of their same age peers by reason of their disability,
- have a Travel Capability Rating (TCR) of C, D, E or F (see Section 3.2.2),
- or meet Exceptional Circumstances eligibility (see Section 3.2.3).

The following would **not be eligible** for travel assistance:

- pre-preparatory year student,
- Full Fee Paying Overseas Student (FFPOS),
- student attending an Autism Queensland campus,
- second and subsequent student(s) with a disability travelling with a sibling with a disability by private motor vehicle or taxi (e.g. Student 1 and Student 2 travel together from Point A to Point B, then Student 2 continues to Point C. Funding is available for Student 1 from Point A to Point B and Student 2 from Point B to Point C).
- student conveyed on the free school bus to a non-state school (parents can apply for other assistance e.g. car to a bus pick up/set down point),
- student attending an approved hospital school, and
- student attending any form of 'work experience' program.

The student will be eligible for travel assistance when the school principal has confirmed their eligibility.

A review of a student's transport assistance needs must occur at least annually by the school team and authorised by the school principal. A review may also be undertaken when a student's travel circumstances change.

Changes in the Travel Capability Rating must reflect the changes in the student's transport needs as they mature. As part of the PLP process, students' transport needs will be determined according to the Travel Capability Rating scale Section 3.2.2 below.

3.2.1 TRAVEL TRAINING

Travel training refers to the development of skills designed to increase a student's ability for independent travel. At an appropriate age, students who do not currently possess the skills to travel alone and have the potential to develop these skills, are expected to have these addressed through the school's educational program. The training may be identified as a goal in the student's PLP.

Most students eligible for travel assistance through this program would be expected to be moving towards transport independence.

3.2.2 STUDENT TRAVEL CAPABILITY RATING

A student given a Travel Capability Rating (TCR) of **A or B will NOT be eligible** for NSSTAS SWD Travel Assistance Program:

	Category	Description	Eligibility
A	Independent	The student can negotiate all public transport services including change of buses, ferries and/or trains.	Student is **not eligible** for NSSTAS Students With Disability travel assistance.
B	Supported Independent	The student is able to wait at the appropriate place for a bus, ferry and/or train and knows where/when to alight. The student is able to board the bus, ferry and/or train and travel safely to the destination.	Student is **not eligible** for NSSTAS Students With Disability travel assistance.

A student given a Travel Capability Rating of **C, D, E or F will be eligible** for NSSTAS SWD Travel Assistance Program:

	Category	Description	Eligibility
C	Semi-Independent	The student is supervised while waiting at the appropriate place for a bus, ferry and/or train. Once on board, the student can ride unaccompanied but may be met at the destination by an adult or responsible person. The driver/conductor may assist the student to alight at the destination. This category includes a student who is conveyed to and/or from school by private motor vehicle rather than being restricted to travelling by public transport.	A student conveyed by bus, ferry or train will be eligible for a refund of their fares. A student conveyed by private motor vehicle will be eligible for travel assistance at the current kilometric rate per private motor vehicle.
D	Travel Assisted	The student can travel on public transport only when accompanied by a responsible adult. Where transport connections have to be made, the presence of an accompanying adult is needed. This category includes a student who is conveyed to and/or from school by private motor vehicle rather than being	A student conveyed by bus, ferry or train will be eligible for a refund of their fares. The fares of an approved (e.g. approved NDIS plan or appointed by the school) escort may be rebated to the parent. A student conveyed by private motor vehicle will be eligible for travel assistance at the current

		restricted to travelling by public transport.	kilometric rate per private motor vehicle.
E	Dependent	The student is not able to use a bus, ferry or train to travel, due to their disability, but can travel in a vehicle (e.g. private motor vehicle or taxi) that does not require modification.	The student will be eligible for travel assistance at the current kilometric rate per private motor vehicle or the current kilometric rate per taxi.
F	Most Dependent	The student has a physical disability and can only travel in an approved modified vehicle (see Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads requirements); this includes a privately owned vehicle, taxi or share ride.	A student conveyed in an approved modified vehicle will be eligible for travel assistance at the current kilometric rate per private motor vehicle. A student conveyed in an approved modified taxi or share ride will be eligible for travel assistance up to a maximum of $300 per week, inclusive of any subsidy provided by the Department of Transport and Main Roads *Taxi Subsidy Scheme*.

3.2.3 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In exceptional circumstances, some students may be eligible for financial support. This category is designed to cover students who may have a temporary serious health condition or disability and have transport needs like those outlined above. They must have their medical condition confirmed in writing by a medical practitioner and the report must be provided to the school. The medical condition could include, but is not limited to, anorexia, cystic fibrosis, broken limbs or recovery from surgery. Travel assistance would be for a specified time, as defined in the medical practitioner's report.

3.2.4 DUAL ENROLMENT

It is acknowledged that in some circumstances a student with a disability may attend more than one school to access specialist disability support. These students may be eligible for travel assistance to access a non-state school. This arrangement is referred to as a dual enrolment.

4 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The financial support available through this program depends on how the student is transported to and from school. If government funds are limited in any given semester the level of assistance provided to eligible applicants will be a proportion of their normal entitlement.

Travel assistance will only be provided from a student's normal residential address to the school attended, via the shortest trafficable route. Distance is checked via *Google Maps* or *Whereis* if not available on *Google Maps*. An exception may be made if a student is required to reside in temporary accommodation.

4.1 DAY STUDENTS

Assistance will be provided in accordance with the following table:

Mode of Travel	Assistance Available
Bus, Ferry or Train/ Rail	The travel costs for a distance eligible student will be refunded based on one-way distance, by the shortest trafficable route, from the student's residence, or alternative accommodation, to the school attended, utilising the School Transport Maximum Cash Fare Schedule (STMCFS) provided by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR).
Private Motor Vehicle	A kilometric allowance will be provided. It will be based on the one-way distance, by the shortest trafficable route, from the student's residence, or alternative accommodation, to the school attended.
Taxi/Share Ride	If a student has been rated *'E - Dependent'* in the Travel Capability Rating scale, a taxi/share ride kilometric allowance will be provided. It will be based on the one-way distance, by the shortest trafficable route, from the student's residence, or alternative accommodation, to the school attended. If a student has been rated *'F - Most Dependent'* in the Travel Capability Rating scale, the full cost of taxi/share ride fares will be refunded, up to a maximum of $300 per week, inclusive of any assistance provided through the TMR *Taxi Subsidy Scheme* referred to in Section 5, and upon the applicant providing all receipts as evidence of this expenditure, upon request.

4.2 BOARDING STUDENTS

An eligible boarding school student who attends a boarding school on either a term or weekly basis may be eligible for transport assistance if they are conveyed to and/or from their school by public transport or private motor vehicle. A term boarding student will qualify for two trips per term when they travel from home to the school attended at the start of and the end of each term (i.e. four trips per semester). A weekly boarding student will qualify for two trips per week when they travel from home to the school attended at

the start of the week, board at school or stay with a relative or friend during the school week (e.g. because the relative/friend resides closer to the student's school), and travel back to their home at the end of the week.

4.3 REBATE CALCULATION

It is essential that the public transport fares charged by the transport provider do not exceed those set by TMR in its STMCFS. If the transport provider charges greater than the fare schedule fee, NSSTAS will take into consideration only the costs up to the maximum fare as per the Schedule.

If the bus pick-up/ set-down point differs from the student's residential address and the Scheme has that alternate address on record, the application distance will be calculated using the shortest trafficable route* to the school attended. The shortest trafficable route used will be whichever is shorter: the route from the student's residence or the route from the bus pick-up/ set-down point.

For a student travelling on a Translink service or other service with discounted fares, the rebate we pay you is based on Go Card concession fares or discounted fares (depending on the average weekly number of trips the student catches the service).

For a student travelling on a single/return/pay-as-you-go ticketed service, the rebate we pay you is based on the average weekly number of trips the student catches the service.

For a student travelling on a Weekly, Monthly, Term, Semester or Annual ticketed service, the rebate we pay you is based on the average weekly number of trips the student catches the service when we apply the STMCFS to cap your fares:

0-1 trips per week	Weekly fare we assess is zero
2 trips per week	Weekly fare we assess is calculated on 2 trips per week
3-5 trips per week	Weekly fare we assess is calculated on 5 trips per week
6-10 trips per week	Weekly fare we assess is calculated on the weekly rate of the ticket type purchased.

*The shortest trafficable route is checked via *Google Maps* or if not available on *Google Maps*, *Whereis*.

5 TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS

A student may be eligible for travel assistance through the TMR *Taxi Subsidy Scheme*. Check the eligibility criteria for the Taxi Subsidy Scheme at TMR on 1300 134 755 or from their website tmr.qld.gov.au.

Applicants are requested not to also apply for conveyance allowance through the TMR for the same student's travel through our Scheme, as this would be considered as "double dipping" and therefore recovery of payments and penalties may apply.

6 APPLICATION PROCESS

Parents, guardians, or carers applying for NSSTAS travel assistance may submit an online application form available during the month of May for Semester One and October for Semester Two on the NSSTAS website at SchoolTransport.com.au.

All applications must be received by the 31st of May or October (whichever applies) to be eligible for funding for that semester. Applications for the NSSTAS travel assistance cannot be accepted after the closing date.

The school principal is required to complete a verification report for students, following communication from NSSTAS.

Travel assistance rebates are normally deposited into the nominated bank accounts of eligible applicants by August for Semester One and December for Semester Two. All eligible applicants are advised via email that their entitlement has been deposited into their nominated bank account.

A small fee may be deducted from the entitlement of applicants who provide inaccurate bank account details or fail to advise NSSTAS of any changes to bank account details prior to rebates being paid.

7 PRIVACY

By submitting an application through NSSTAS, the parent consents to the disclosure of personal and sensitive information to CEQL and/or NSSTAS to enable the administration of NSSTAS. This information is collected though a standardised application form. This information may be shared with Government authorities, for example Centrelink (if concession card details are provided). If this information is not disclosed, full or partial payment by NSSTAS may not be possible. Further information is available in the CEQL Privacy Policy and Privacy Compliance Manual available by entering 'privacy' in the search field at ceql.catholic.edu.au.

8 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY FARE AUDITS

Each semester a sample of applicants are selected to provide proof of the expenditure declared on their application form. The proof may be in the form of:

(a) invoices/receipts from the transport provider,

(b) used bus/ferry tickets issued to the student,
(c) a letter from the transport provider or the school attended, confirming fares and travel frequency,
(d) a transaction record from a registered Translink Go Card, or
(e) a signed statutory declaration confirming expenditure (please note that should this form of evidence be submitted, NSSTAS will confirm as necessary, the expenditure with other parties).

It is recommended that applicants retain evidence of expenditure for three months from the date the NSSTAS payment was received for that semester (NSSTAS will not ask for these to be provided after three months from that date).

9 APPEAL PROCESS

Any appeal under these guidelines should be brought to the attention of the Reference Committee via email to: info@schooltransport.com.au or posted to:

Non-State Schools Transport Assistance Scheme
C/o CEQL
GPO Box 2441
BRISBANE QLD 4001