Assisted school travel and the NDIS
Information for schools, parents and carers

This fact sheet explains how the Assisted School Travel Program (ASTP) works with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The ASTP is a NSW Government program that provides free transport to and from school for eligible students with disability

The ASTP provides transport primarily between home and school for eligible students with disability. The ASTP is provided at no cost to families and seeks to help parents and carers meet their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school.

Access to the ASTP is available where the program criteria are met by both the student and their parent or carer. This is the case whether or not a student, their parent or carer, is an NDIS participant.

Key facts about the ASTP and the NDIS

- The ASTP is managed by the NSW Department of Education, not the NDIS.
- The ASTP provides a service to students with disability enrolled in NSW government and non-government schools. It is a large and complex program, providing school transport for more than 10,500 students across more than 29,000 different routes. These routes are carefully planned and coordinated to meet the transport and wellbeing needs of students.
- Transport through the ASTP is provided as an in-kind support for NDIS participants who are eligible for an ASTP service.
- Funding for school transport may be represented by a notional dollar amount in an NDIS plan.
- Parents and carers cannot manage this service through their child's NDIS plans.
- The ASTP is not a registered NDIS service provider. Transport services provided through the ASTP continue to operate under the same contract agreement and guidelines that were in place prior to the rollout of the NDIS in NSW.

If a child is already receiving school transport through the ASTP and they are eligible for the NDIS, this will show in their NDIS plan as an in-kind service

The NDIS is responsible for developing individual support plans for children and young people with disability who need specialised support with their daily living. An NDIS plan will include transport to and from school if the child is receiving a transport service through the ASTP. The NDIS plan may include funding for transport at other times if the NDIS decides that support is reasonable and necessary.

The ASTP and the NDIS operate separately. The ASTP does not have access to information about individual NDIS plans.

If a child is receiving school transport through the ASTP, this transport service will continue as normal when they become an NDIS participant. Parents and carers do not need to do anything.

If a child is an NDIS participant and they are not eligible for school transport through the ASTP, the NDIS may provide transport where it decides this is reasonable and necessary.

Parents do not need to pay for school transport provided through the ASTP

Parents do not need to pay for an ASTP service from their child's NDIS plan. A child's NDIS plan will note they are receiving a service from the ASTP and may include a dollar amount as a marker. This dollar amount is the same for all NDIS participants in NSW who use the ASTP. It does not represent the cost of providing school transport for a child.
In their request, parents should include information about the purpose of the variation, the alternate location, and their or the centre's capacity to transport their child. Principals should contact the ASTP team for advice before submitting variations.

Where a variation cannot be accommodated by the ASTP and the child is an NDIS participant, parents should discuss their child’s other transport needs with their NDIS planner.

Applications and transport services are managed by the ASTP team in the Department of Education

The ASTP team is responsible for:
- assessing students' eligibility for ASTP
- managing the service providers who have been contracted to provide transport for ASTP
- paying the service providers when they provide a transport service for ASTP
- managing student transport service for ASTP.

Schools work in partnership with the ASTP by recommending student applications and assisting in the day-to-day management of services.

Requests for variations will be considered on a case by case basis

The ASTP guidelines have not changed with the roll out of the NDIS. The guidelines state that the ASTP is not available for the sole purpose of transporting students to and from respite services, work placements, VET programs, or other similar activities that take place at venues other than schools.

Families can request a temporary variation for school transport to and from locations other than their home. Variations, such as for planned respite, may be approved where they can be accommodated within existing transport services and where there are minimal impacts on the child and other students.

All requests for variations must be made by parents through their child's school. Variation requests from other services or centres are not accepted.

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