

**INTRODUCTION**

Bourke & District Children's Services (BDCS) understands and recognises the fact that some children have to travel to be able to access the benefits of a high-quality early childhood program. Children are also able to access the After-School Care (ASC) service using the school buses in our area that transport school children each day.

Bourke & District Children's Services also understands that families in our community may not have access to transport for their children to attend our service, therefore we will provide a bus service to the town area of Bourke, to enable all children to have access to Bourke & District Children's Services Preschool and gain the long-term benefits of a high quality care and education program.

Transport by the bus service will also be available to children and families attending other BDCS services for excursions and community events when required and available.

Bourke & District Children's Services will ensure that it meets the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018 and NSW Legislation – Road Rules 2014 in regard to the provision of a bus service to and from our early childhood education and care service.

**OVERALL GOALS – What are we going to do?**

- To ensure a practical and safe approach to bus travel to and from the service.
- Take specific steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children.
- Identify and manage risks associated with:
  - Transport between a vehicle and the service premises or other location
  - Transport for single or regular trips
  - Transport of children other than as part of an excursion and
  - Transport associated with excursions

**OVERALL STRATEGIES – How will it be done?****Planning**

When planning for transportation staff will:

- Assess the requirements for the transportation
- Conduct a risk assessment
- Book transport
- Make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions
- Inform families of the details of the transportation including pick up and destination, objectives and outcomes, requirements, and the availability of a risk assessment
- Provide parents or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise transportation of a child, with a transportation authorisation form to complete
- Collect completed authorisation forms for each child using the transportation
- Request additional adult participation for the transportation where required
- Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen) and mobile phone to be readily available for the transportation

- Consider any additional factors in the planning of transportation for children with additional needs.
- Where possible, our service will uphold the right for all children to access all transport.

## Regular Transportation

Regular transportation is transport by the service or arranged by the service (other than as part of an excursion) of a child being educated and cared for by the service, where the circumstances relevant to a risk assessment are substantially the same each time the child is transported.

- Our service recognises that risks apply equally during periods of regular transportation, as they do to single transportation
- A risk assessment for regular transportation will be carried out once in a 3-month period, provided the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same each time the child is transported.

## Risk Assessment

- A transport risk assessment will always be conducted before our service transports a child/ren to evaluate risks each time transportation is used (unless the transportation is 'regular transportation')
- The Nominated Supervisor / Approved provider / will ensure that the risk assessment identifies and assesses the risk the transport may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst using the transport and will specify how the service will manage any risks identified.
- Once risks have been identified, they will be categorised as high, moderate or low and management of the risks will be detailed.
- Educators and any responsible adults using the transport are aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (regulation 97(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transport.
- Before using the transport, risks are checked including the weather to assess any increases to the level of risk and whether the transport can proceed.
- A procedure for each route of travel will be created in line with the risk assessment and will outline specific educator responsibilities, including the use of strollers and safety restraints.

The risk assessment conducted will consider:

- the proposed route and duration of the transportation, including estimated time of travel between the different locations
- each of the proposed pick-up locations and destination
- the means of transport
- the purpose of the transport
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- any water hazards on the proposed route travelled and at each stop
- number of adults and children involved in the transportation
- given the risks posed by transportation, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required

- whether any items should be readily available during transportation (for example, a mobile phone and list of emergency contact numbers for the children being transported)
- the process for entering and exiting the education and care service premises and the pick-up location or destination (as required)
- procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking
- strategies for accounting for all children using the transportation, particularly during embarking and disembarking the vehicle.

## Authorisation for Excursions

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that authorisation for a child to be transported is given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority

to authorise transportation of a child. The authorisation will include:

- the child's name
- the reason the child is to be transported
- if the transportation is for regular transportation, a description of when the child is to be transported
- if the authorisation is not for regular transportation, the date the child is to be transported
- a description of the proposed pick-up location and destination
- the means of transport
- the period of time during which the child is to be transported
- the anticipated number of children likely to be transported
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children during the transportation
- any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported
- that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the education and care service
- that written policies and procedures for transporting children are available at the education and care service.

## Staffing Arrangements

- Educators using the transportation will be no less than the number prescribed in the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and depending on the supervision requirements, may need to be higher to ensure adequate supervision.
- The number of educators will also be adequate to supervise any responsible adults who volunteer to assist with the transportation.
- Where an educator assumes responsibility for driving the bus (and holds the relevant licence to drive) are not considered to be included in the ratio to meet ratio requirements
- Consideration will be given to the number of educators who have required first aid qualifications and the number of educators required to educate and care for children who remain at the service.

- Where a group of children are taken on transportation while a number of children remain at the service, at least one educator who holds the following qualifications must be in attendance at both the transportation and at the service where children are being educated and cared for and must be immediately available in an emergency. At least:
  - staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who holds a current approved first aid qualification
  - staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training
  - staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken approved emergency asthma management training (regulation 136(1)).
- All educators attending the transportation will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (regulation 97(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transportation.
- Where an educator assumes responsibility for driving the bus (and holds the relevant driving licence to drive) are not considered to be included in the ratio to meet ratio requirements

### Families and Volunteers

- Families will be encouraged to participate in transportation to increase the number of responsible adults and assist in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children.
- Families and volunteers cannot be counted in order to meet ratio requirements under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Family members wishing to attend will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of the service. If the responsible adult needs to bring their child's sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the responsibility provided to this adult will be adjusted accordingly and considered in the risk assessment.
- Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole charge of children (including their children) and must be supervised by an educator at all times.
- All responsible adults attending the transportation will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency (regulation 97(a)) and are aware of the risk assessment for the transportation.

### Conducting the Transportation

- All educators, volunteers and children using the transportation will be informed of transportation timetable/ itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.
- A list of children using the transportation will be left at the service and a copy carried by the delegated responsible person.
- Items to be readily available when transporting children include:

- a suitable stocked first-aid kit including EpiPen; a list of adults involved in transportation and contact information for each
- an operating mobile phone with an appropriate telephone network or other means of communicating with the service and emergency services;
- a list of children involved, including children's contact information, emergency contact numbers and the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service;
- children's medication, health plans and individual risk assessment and
- other items as required e.g. Sunscreen, drinking cups, jackets, hats, hygiene products etc.

Eligibility for children to travel to and from the service on the BDCS bus will be assessed with regard to the family's home address and its location within the town limits (levee bank), and the Alice Edwards Village

If the BDCS bus is unavailable due to scheduled or unscheduled maintenance, driver illness, unavailability or any other reason, the BDCS will ensure that all parents and caregivers are contacted as soon as possible to notify them about the relevant issue.

Parents are requested to inform the BDCS Preschool before the bus leaves in the morning for the collection of children, if their child will not be attending preschool.

The bus will leave the BDCS Preschool at 8.30am each day to collect children with two staff members present.

The bus will sound the horn outside each house where the children are to be collected. If there is no response to the first sound another horn will be sounded and if there is still no response the bus will leave to collect the next child.

When pick-ups are complete, or the bus is full (whichever occurs first) the bus will return to BDCS Preschool where children will be walked into the service by the staff member and signed in, as per the Arrival at Preschool procedure. If required, the driver will await the return of the second staff member for another pick-up run, or if all children have been picked up, the bus run final checklist will be completed and signed off by two staff and will be parked.

The bus will leave the BDCS Preschool at 3pm to return the children to their homes, if there is no parent or guardian to take delivery of the child, the horn will be sounded once, and if no response, will be sounded a second time. If the parent/guardian does not collect the children from the bus, the children will be returned to the BDCS Preschool where a phone call will be made to the parents, carers or emergency contact person for the child/ren to be collected.

#### **Bus accident or breakdown**

If the BDCS bus is involved in a traffic accident or breakdown while transporting children to and from the BDCS we will ensure that:

- We follow the applicable procedures in response to the injury or death of children, staff members or bus driver
- Emergency Services will be contacted as required.
- We follow applicable procedures in relation to alternative transport arrangements focusing on the safety of children at the site of the accident or breakdown and during any alternative transport arrangements.

- We contact the regulatory authorities as soon as possible.
- We contact parents, caregivers or emergency contact persons to provide all the information and support.
- We offer counselling to parents and children if required or requested.

### **Incident on the bus**

If at any time during the transportation of children on our bus service, a staff member believes that a child is at serious risk of harm (from illness or injury), they will take appropriate action to contact emergency services and the parents/carers. Staff will use their first aid and emergency training and relevant procedures to determine the best course of action for the safety of the child.

### **Replacement Bus**

If the BDCS bus is broken down or unable to be used, a replacement bus may be hired or on loan to BDCS for preschool or other BDCS authorised activity and therefore the same policies and procedures will apply regarding bus transport.

**Upon enrolment, this policy will be made available to all parents and carers of children travelling on any bus.**

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The Approved Provider Authority/ Responsibility**

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.

### **The Nominated Supervisor Authority/ Responsibility**

*In relation to the BDCS bus service:*

- Ensure the children are accompanied by 2 staff at all times and remain in child to educator ratios across the service at all times. The bus driver is not included in these ratios but may assist in the supervision plan.
- Ensure that the bus is maintained and serviced to a high standard on a regular basis and attends an RMS inspection every 6 months.
- Ensure the bus meets all safety requirements for the transport of children including approved child restraints, fire extinguishers and emergency exits.
- Ensure the bus has up to date registration, CTP insurance and comprehensive insurance.
- Ensure that child restraints are correctly fitted and checked annually by suitably certified personnel.
- Is kept clean and tidy.
- Develop and maintain a risk assessment (see appendix 2)
- Consider and plan for adequate supervision of children at all times. This includes the following factors:
  - the number, age and ability of children

- the number and positioning of educators
- each child's current activity
- visibility and accessibility
- risks inherent in the mode of transportation
- risks inherent in the environment, location or route
- any risk assessment
- the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- Ensure that at all times there is available in the case of an emergency:
- at least one staff member or one Nominated Supervisor of the service who holds a current approved first aid qualification
- at least one staff member or one Nominated Supervisor of the service who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training
- at least one staff member or one Nominated Supervisor of the service who has undertaken current approved emergency asthma management training.

(Regulation 136)

*In relation to the driver of the BDCS bus:*

- Ensure the bus driver holds a proper and current NSW driver's licence allowing them to drive our bus.
- Has a good driving record.
- Is experienced, careful and safety conscious.
- Has completed BDCS staff and Bus Driver Induction

#### **Early Childhood Educators Authority/ Responsibility**

- Ensure all children are signed in on arrival from the bus and out once the child is safely on the bus for departure home.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child.
- Develop and maintain a risk assessment for this continuing regular excursion (appendix 1)

*The educator accompanying the driver on the BDCS bus will:*

- Have an awareness of their Child Protection responsibilities as a mandatory reporter and understand the policies and procedures of the service in relation to child protection.
- Ensure children are restrained correctly in child restraints prior to the bus moving off.
- Ensure that all educators and driver are wearing their seatbelt correctly.
- Complete the bus checklist in conjunction with driver; this includes checking that no children remain on the bus at the end of each route.
- Ensure the bus has the correct number of children on board as the seats available
- Ensure the children enter and exit the bus safely
- Ensure the parents or designated person sign the child on and off the bus

- Ensure a risk assessment has been carried out and reviewed every 3 months

### **Family Authority/ Responsibility**

*In relation to bus company travel parents/carers must ensure that:*

- Organise with the relevant bus company for their child/ren to travel to and from BDCS After School Care Service on the bus.
- Complete the bus section on the child's enrolment form authorising the BDCS staff to sign the child in and out of BDCS and eliminating the BDCS ASC of all responsibility for the child once the child is on the bus if not BDCS bus.
- Inform the BDCS ASC which bus the child will be travelling on, including their regular routine and advise of any changes to that routine prior to 2.30pm.

*The parents or authorised person must be available to:*

- Deliver the child to the BDCS bus and to sign for the delivery of the child to the BDCS bus staff.
- Collect the child from the BDCS bus and to sign for the collection of the child from the BDCS bus staff.

### **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

### **RELATED LEGISLATION**

- Education and Care National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care National Regulations 99
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Road Rules 2014

### **RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS**

- National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care: Standard 2.2 Element 2.2.1, Standard 6.1 Element 6.1.2, Standard 6.2 Element 6.2.1.

### **SOURCES**

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Department of Education: Issue 4 – Unpacking the key elements of transportation: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/whats-happening-in-the-early->



[childhood-education-sector/news-and-events/spotlight-on-quality/issue-4-unpacking-the-key-elements-of-transportation](#)

**Policy Revision History**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Authorised By</i>	<i>Description of Amendments</i>	<i>Sections affected</i>
Jan 2021	P. Ritchie – GM		

- **Review Date: Jan 2022**

## **Bus Procedure**

The following procedure outlines the steps required in transporting children to and from Preschool.

- Bus driver to complete daily pre- check the bus before departing bus parking (Tyres, Fuel, Cleanliness, Warning lights)
- Educator checks emails and messages to finalise the children whom need to be collected
- Organise educators in line with ratio to be on the bus for the duration of the bus run, in addition to the bus driver. At least 3 adults including the bus driver for all runs.
- Bus driver has the bus list with addresses and emergency contacts
- Staff board bus
- Start run, stopping at each designated address as per enrolment or written nomination
- Beep horn once at address – children are to be brought to the bus, assisted onto the bus by educators and signed in by parents/carers
- Educators to ensure that children are correctly restrained, bags are under the seat in front, and then return to their seat and restraint, notifying bus driver that they are ready to proceed
- Once all children are collected or the bus is at ratio, educators do a head count from back to front and then proceed to the Preschool, noting on sign in sheets. Correct numbers to be cross checked against number signed in.
- Once at preschool bus will pull up at front gate
- Once at Preschool Bus driver will stand at front gate, Educators send each child from bus door to line up with driver inside front gate
- Once last child has left bus educator checks the bus walking to the back of the bus checking for children and belongings, ensuring they check under all seats
- Educators with the support of the bus driver complete roll call inside gate – as each child is present and has been called, they can then proceed one by one to the front door of the preschool.
- Once all children are accounted for and the roll is complete the bus driver with educators and proceeds for the next round of pick up if required
- If all children have been collected the bus driver along with 1 educator completes the end of run checklist and signs off in conjunction with the educator.
- If the final bus run for the morning or afternoon, the bus driver completes a second check of the bus walking to end of the bus checking under seats prior to parking or locking up the bus
- Once complete the bus driver can return the bus to its park