



Specialised Education School Transport Assistance (SESTA)

October 2018

Driver, Caregiver and School Staff Responsibilities & Expectations

Background

This document outlines the minimum expectations of SESTA drivers, caregivers and school staff.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Transport Service Providers (TSP) Health and Safety and Child Protection policies. All drivers must be aware of, and comply with their obligations under those policies.

This document may be amended from time to time, and is available as a document download from the Ministry of Education website, or the Ministry's School Transport Team at school.transport@education.govt.nz. It can be provided to schools and caregivers at any time.

SESTA Driver Expectations

It is a contractual requirement that all SESTA services are assigned to dedicated drivers, and that those drivers will:

- a) Be familiar with and comply with company and Ministry of Education policies and procedures including emergency evacuation procedure/s for the vehicle.
- b) Be familiar with the designated pick-ups and drop-offs.
- c) Protect the rights of students by assuring that students are not bullied, threatened or picked on.
- d) Treat the student/s with respect and courtesy;
- e) Monitor and supervise students with appropriate management and correction of disruptive pupils who threaten the safety of others.
- f) Provide reliable and consistent services, that ensure the students are at, and leave home/school/respice, on time;
- g) Ensure that all vehicles are maintained in a clean and tidy manner;
- h) Safely load, secure and unload equipment that will travel with the student. If the equipment requires specialised training to use, the driver must be adequately trained before transporting any Ministry contracted students.

- i) Ensure all students in a wheelchair who are transported in a hoist vehicle are secured in all of the following ways:
 - i. The wheelchair frame must be properly secured to the floor of the vehicle at four separate tie-down points.
 - ii. A vehicle seat belt must be fastened for the student travelling in their wheelchair. Although lap seatbelts are allowed, three point seatbelts are a safer option and should always be used wherever upper seatbelt anchorages enable this to occur and it can be safely accommodated with the design of the wheelchair. Drivers must ensure (with the assistance of a caregiver/school staff) that belts are worn and fastened correctly.
 - iii. Any other personal positioning equipment required by the individual student for safe travel must also be used.

Note: Drivers must be trained in the use of hoist, wheelchair restraints.

- j) Driver must be appropriately trained to identify that any restraints used in the vehicle are compliant with the installation instructions of the manufacturer.
- k) Never allow unauthorised people to board or enter the vehicle.
- l) Any restraints used in the vehicle must comply with the installation instructions of the manufacturer.

Note: if this means modifying the vehicle or addressing an anchor point, this must be proven by a Low Volume Vehicle Certificating Plate or a Manufacturer's Rating being displayed on the vehicle.

- m) The driver and contractor will have contact with caregivers and students prior to introducing a new, or substantially changing a current route, or introducing a new driver;
- n) Maintain clear communication with caregivers and schools;
- o) Ensure all information relating to a student is kept confidential;
- p) Ensure that an adult is present when delivering a student to home/school/respite;
- q) If there is no adult present, unless the driver has the express written permission to do otherwise, the driver is to advise the TSP. The student will then be returned to school or delivered to the nearest police station, or to an alternative address previously agreed to by the Ministry.
- r) Ensure that all incidents, including near misses, are reported to the TSP as soon as the driver can safely do so. The TSP will ensure that all incidents are reported as appropriate and detailed within the SESTA Services Agreement.
- s) SESTA drivers are required to complete, and maintain, basic First Aid skills. The provision of certified first aiders is a control measure for managing risk generally. However, administering medication is a specialised activity therefore drivers will not administer any medication.
- t) **Please note:** if any incident involves the safety of a student, for instance in case of medical or vehicle emergency, the driver must ensure that the vehicle is in a safe location, then immediately phone 111, and then contact the TSP. It is the TSP's responsibility to ensure that

police/fire/ambulance have been contacted. As soon as possible the TSP must ensure that the school(s) and caregiver(s), and Ministry, are advised of the incident.

Services not to be provided by SESTA Drivers

Our obligations are to transport the student to school safely.

Drivers will not:

- a) Touch any student, except in cases of extreme unexpected emergency – where contact is unavoidable the driver must ensure that the incident is recorded in writing;
- b) Assist in the loading and unloading of a student into or out of a SESTA vehicle, apart from the necessary operation of the vehicle (e.g. activating the wheelchair hoist, securing the wheelchair tie-downs, opening the door and ensuring a step is available);
- c) Administer any medication;
- d) Leave the vehicle unattended for any period of time.

Specialist Equipment (including standard seatbelts/harnesses)

Some students may require specific equipment in transit. This equipment may be a special harness or restraint that has been purchased for the student or it could be the standard three-point seatbelt.

Drivers are required to:

- a) Ensure that the equipment is available whenever transport is required;
- b) Ensure all guidelines regarding the safety of the equipment are followed;
- c) Confirm that all seatbelts/restraints are worn correctly. For clarification, this does not mean that the driver will personally fasten the seatbelt/restraint, only that the driver is confirming that the seatbelt is worn. Personally fastening any seatbelt (including wheelchair lap or shoulder belts) or harness is the responsibility of the caregiver or school staff;
- d) Ensure all equipment required for the safe transport of a student travels with the student and is stored securely in the vehicle.

Roles & Responsibility of the Caregiver

The following information provided is what may be reasonably expected from caregivers.

Caregivers are:

- a) Responsible for advising the TSP and Ministry when personal contact details change, i.e. changes to a phone number;
- b) To assist student/s in understanding safety rules and encourage them to abide by them;
- c) Expected to work with the TSP and driver to ensure safe and appropriate student handovers;
- d) Recognise their responsibility for the actions of their children;
- e) To ensure that the student has been toileted, and is ready to be collected, from the front entrance of their home at the agreed time;

- f) To ensure that the student has finished eating their breakfast prior to travelling;
- g) Responsible for ensuring that the vehicle collection/drop-off points have clear access;
- h) Responsible for informing the driver, TSP and school(s) if there have been any changes or events that may impact on student behaviour;
- i) Responsible for supplying the appropriate harness or legal restraints for students travelling in SESTA vehicles and that these are well maintained in accordance with the user manual. In some circumstances the Ministry may accept an application to fund the provision of a harness/restraint.
- j) Responsible for assisting students, where required, in and out of the vehicle and fastening the seat belt and any other personal positioning devices.
- k) **Responsible for being home to meet the student or SESTA vehicle both AM and PM.**

Roles & Responsibility of early childhood and school staff

Noting that a SESTA driver is expressly forbidden to touch any student, or leave the vehicle unattended, early childhood and school staff are:

- a) To be present to assist in the loading and unloading of a student into or out of a SESTA vehicle, apart from the necessary operation of the vehicle (e.g. activating the wheelchair hoist, removing and attaching wheelchair tie-downs, opening the door and ensuring the step is available).
- b) Responsible for assisting students, where required, in and out of the vehicle and fastening the seat belt and any other personal positioning devices;
- c) To ensure that the student has been toileted, and is ready to be collected from the agreed pick-up point at the agreed time;
- d) Responsible for informing the driver, caregiver, TSP and Ministry if there have been any changes or events that may impact on student behaviour.

Changes in Students' Behaviours and/or Needs

If a student's behaviours and/or needs change, which may impact them while travelling in a service, the relevant parties should be informed.

- The caregiver should contact the TSP and school
- The School should contact the caregiver and TSP
- The TSP should inform the caregiver

The TSP must keep a record of the students' needs and behaviours, and update these as required. This record may be required to be made available to the Ministry on request, or in cases where transport may be reviewed.