Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability Guidelines and Procedures
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1. RATIONALE

- The Transport Assistance Program seeks to assist parents, rather than remove their individual responsibility for school transport arrangements.
- The responsibility for conveying students with disability to and from school lies with the parents/caregivers, as is the case for all students attending all schools.
- Training in the use of public and private transport may need to be provided in collaboration with the school.
- Even though the use of private or public transport by a student with disability may not be practicable, the provision of special transport assistance cannot be approved automatically. Parents/caregivers should be actively encouraged to assume their responsibility.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of these guidelines are to:

- ensure that transport services for students with disability are provided within a clear set of guidelines and accountability procedures;
- ensure that transport services for students with disability are provided in an equitable, efficient and cost-effective manner across the State;
- provide clear advice to students, parents/caregivers, schools and districts on eligibility criteria and rights and responsibilities; and
- encourage and direct parents/caregivers and schools to actively pursue travel training programs for students with disability so that they might achieve independent mobility whenever possible.

3. ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

The Transport Assistance Program is intended to assist those students from Early Childhood Intervention Service to senior secondary college who:

- are eligible as determined by the eligibility assessment process;
- attend a school placement recommended by the DoE.

Students who meet the eligibility criteria and are enrolled full-time in a special school, may access contract bus services to and from that school, subject to available seating, however transport to and from all schools remains a parental responsibility.

4. ASSESSMENT FOR ELIGIBILITY

Assessment of students for transport assistance involves the following four-stage process:

- determining the parents/caregivers capacity to meet their responsibility in relation to transporting their child to and from school;
- confirming attendance at the nearest appropriate school/educational facility;
- determining, in collaboration with the parents/caregivers that the student’s level of transport independence fits within the “travel assisted”, “dependent” or “most dependent” range as per Appendix 1; and
- developing and implementing a specific travel training program as part of the student’s Learning Plan, in collaboration with the parents/caregivers and schools, as appropriate. This should be stored in the Student Support System (SSS).
5. PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITY

- The responsibility for conveying students with disability to and from school lies with the parent/carers, as is the case for all students attending school.

- When applying for transport assistance, parents/caregivers’ capacity to convey or arrange conveyance of their children should be fully explored in the first instance. Genuine reasons why this is not possible must be identified on the application for transport assistance (genuine reasons include no access to wheelchair accessible vehicle; this does not include work commitments of parents).

- Parents/caregivers should understand that where special transport assistance is approved it is to a single nominated residence, and is conditional upon their:

  - being present at pick up and set down times unless they have made other agreed arrangements;
  - notifying the transport provider, in advance of pick-up, when student will not require transport;
  - conveying their child between the residence and the special transport vehicle at the pick-up and set down times, if necessary;
  - giving notice to the principal of variations likely to occur in their child’s school attendance pattern e.g. extended illness;
  - cooperating in the review, at least annually, of continuing eligibility for student access to special transport;
  - supporting in-transit behaviour requirements and their implementation if necessary; and
  - active pursuit of a travel training program for the students, where appropriate, both to and from school.

Transport Assistance may be withdrawn if these parental/carer responsibilities are not met.

6. FORMS OF ASSISTANCE

The following types of special transport assistance may be provided subject to these guidelines and the availability of the appropriate type of transport:

- public bus transport assistance
- conveyance allowance for use of a private motor vehicle
- contracted bus transport
- taxi travel (maxi taxi)
- a combination of the above

Contract bus or taxi services will only be considered when parents/caregivers demonstrate that they are unable to transport their student to and from school or arrangements cannot be made for the student to travel on public transport and other forms of community travel e.g. HACC.

The service will be subject to regular review and the available budget.

7. VARIATIONS OF TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Transport assistance is provided on a strictly home ↔ school ↔ home basis at the beginning and end of the normal school day. Variations should not take place without the prior, written approval of the Transport Committee, or its nominee, and may only be applied for in the following circumstances:

7.1 Respite:

- Transport assistance may be provided for eligible students to a recognised respite centre if that service is available within the existing transport schedule and budget allocations, and if it is a regular, scheduled arrangement. Ad hoc changes to transport arrangements are not possible.

7.2 Dual Enrolment:

Please check the Department’s website to ensure this is the most recent copy.

Last updated 27 September, 2018

Version 1
• Subject to these guidelines and procedures, transport assistance may be provided in the case of formal dual enrolment, within normal contracted routes if seats are available.

7.3 Transport is not available for travel to therapy or excursions

7.4 Transport of sibling/s of students - The purpose of this program is to provide transport assistance for students with disability. Transport for a sibling/s of a student with a disability for whom transport assistance has been approved, will only be considered in extenuating circumstances and must also be approved by the Transport Committee. Such transport will only be provided on a short-term basis, if there is a spare seat available and if there is no additional cost incurred. It will be withdrawn if circumstances change.

Applications for variations to the transport arrangements within these criteria should be submitted to the Inclusion and Access Coordinator.

Consideration will be given to the provision of transport assistance in cases which do not meet these criteria only in exceptional circumstances. Contact in the first instance should be with the Inclusion and Access Coordinators who will refer the case to the Transport Committee for a decision.

The Transport Committee consists of the Inclusion and Access Coordinators, Manager, Disability Services (DoE) and representative from the Department of State Growth.

A review of the Transport Committee's decisions regarding eligibility for assistance can be requested if there is a grievance or disagreement expressed regarding eligibility, or if new information is made available to the committee.

8. TRAVEL TRAINING

• Independent mobility is a significant factor in assisting students to gain access to the environment and develop a positive self-image. Many education programs for students with disability are underpinned by the need for community access and mobility.

• Travel training is a priority curriculum activity for many students and at an appropriate age students who do not currently possess the skills to travel alone but have the potential to develop the skills required, should have this need addressed through the Learning Plan process. Inclusion and Access Coordinators can be contacted for program advice.

• Parents/caregivers are encouraged to be actively involved in travel training from home to school. Parents/caregivers are also encouraged to consolidate and extend their children's knowledge and skills in community access, mobility and road safety outside school hours.

• Travel training should incorporate methods of travel which will be available to the student after he/she leaves school. Such transportation may include:
  - Walking
  - Wheelchairs (manual or electric)
  - Bicycles
  - Buses
  - Taxis
  - Specialised community transport

• There is a clear need for close consultation and collaboration between the school and parents/caregivers, particularly when travel training is initially proposed and when special transport services are phased out as travel training progresses.

• Specific strategies for the phased reduction and eventual cessation of special transport services are required. Independent travel should only be undertaken once the student has reliably demonstrated the essential travel and road safety skills and protective behaviours.
9. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

9.1 Eligibility of a student for transport assistance is determined by using the Eligibility Schedule (Appendix 1). Students whose level of transport independence is at level 4, 5, or 6 (travel assisted, dependent or most dependent) are potentially eligible for travel assistance.

9.2 Once the recommended school placement has been identified assessment procedures for transport assistance must be initiated as identified in ASSESSMENT FOR ELIGIBILITY. The following information is also required:

- the student’s name, age, address and school/s
- educational support needs of the student
- the recommended placement
- the capacity of the student to travel to and from the recommended placement
- any special equipment which may need to accompany the student, the need for a bus aide, or the need for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

9.3 During the assessment process, liaison with officers from the Department of State Growth may be necessary, especially if information is needed about local public transport services, conveyance or the availability of particular types of contract transport.

9.4 The eligibility of all students for transport assistance is subject to annual review and student requirements will be described in the student’s Learning Plan.

9.5 An interim review is required given the following circumstances:

- change of home address;
- change of school arrangements;
- change in the student’s capacity to travel independently;
- change in parents/carers capacity to provide or arrange transport.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the school the principal (or nominee) will:

- arrange for an assessment of the student’s transport requirements and his/her eligibility for transport assistance in accordance with the policy and guidelines
- liaise where required with relevant DoE staff regarding the availability and provision of appropriate transport
- advise the parent or guardian of the assessment recommendations
- ensure that assessment for eligibility is undertaken by a nominated staff member
- ensure that the assessment is reviewed at least once a year
- ensure that the assessment is reviewed when a student’s circumstances change
- advise parents/carers of the outcome of the application for assistance.

Inclusion and Access Coordinators will:

- confirm the school placement of a student prior to the assessment for transport assistance
- ensure that the relevant staff are fully familiar with the assessment of student transport requirements within the guidelines and procedures
- assist schools in the implementation of the guidelines and procedures
- provide a report on individual cases on request of the Committee of Review
- liaise with the relevant DoE staff to provide the most cost-effective transport arrangements for students requiring transport assistance.
- monitor procedures and guidelines for transport for students requiring transport assistance and provide relevant advice to the Transport Committee;
- liaise with the Department of State Growth, other transport providers and therapists etc as necessary;
assist schools in the implementation of the guidelines and procedures.

Manager, Disability Services DoE will:

- convene the Transport Committee;
- revise Transport Assistance Program Guidelines in consultation with Inclusion and Access Coordinators;
- administer the Transport Assistance for Students with Disability Program budget;
- ensure funding for student taxi transport and bus assistants is allocated from central special education funding.

## 11. FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require more information, please contact:

- The Principal of your school in the first instance
- Manager, Disability Services: disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorised by:</th>
<th>Jodee Wilson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position of authorising person:</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary – Support and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date authorised:</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed by:</td>
<td>Disability Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of last review:</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of next review:</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This document replaces:</td>
<td>Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability Guidelines and Procedure 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX ONE: LEVELS OF TRANSPORT INDEPENDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Independence</th>
<th>Amount of Supervision Required</th>
<th>Type of Transport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Adult Travel:</strong> The child negotiates all public transport services including change of buses without difficulty.</td>
<td><strong>Nil</strong></td>
<td>General public transport (e.g., bus), school transport services requiring unescorted independent travel to and from a pick-up point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Independent Child:</strong> Child is able to wait by the side of the road, recognise his bus and know where to get off. His physical disability, if any, do not bar him from climbing the bus steps and taking a seat. He is also capable of standing while the bus is in motion.</td>
<td><strong>Nil</strong></td>
<td>General public transport for familiar route. School transport service over contracted route. (Unescorted independent travel to and from a pick-up point.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Semi-independent</strong></td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Supervision from home and school to pick-up point.</td>
<td>General public transport for familiar route. School transport service over contracted route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child lacks the competence to wait by the side of the road and/or recognise his bus. However, once put on a public bus at one end can sit unaccompanied to his destination. The bus driver may have to stop at the appropriate destination. If the set down point is busy the child may have to be met. The child would be free from behavioural problems.</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> Perhaps supervision from set down point to school or home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Travel Assisted</strong></td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Supervision from home to pick-up point.</td>
<td><strong>i.</strong> General public transport only where suitable escort is available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These children have not developed the skills to travel in public alone. They require supervision at all stages of the journey. This supervision could be by the driver or by a bus aide.</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> On transport service.</td>
<td><strong>ii.</strong> Contracted service providing escort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>c.</strong> From vehicle to school. Supervision (a), (b) and (c) could be the driver.</td>
<td><strong>iii.</strong> Mini bus or taxi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Dependent</strong></td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Supervision from home to school as and if necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These children may have medical conditions (e.g., severe epilepsy), severe behavioural problems, moderate physical and/or intellectual disability. They may require special restraining devices or the close proximity to a supervising adult.</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> Assistance with mobility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Most Dependent</strong></td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Supervision from home to school. and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These children have severe physical and multiple disability. They cannot be carried in vehicles with standard design and fittings because of the severity of their disability.</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> Assistance with mobility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX TWO: SUBMISSION PROCESS: INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Applications for students who require specialised transport must be completed and forwarded to the Inclusion and Access Coordinator by the due date, for the following year.
- Requests for transport assistance do not carry over from one year to another.
- Students who receive transport assistance will primarily have Severe Disability Register status. Other students with disability will be considered in extenuating circumstances.
- Transport assistance is only provided between home (or the location identified on the Transport Assistance Application) and school at the beginning and end of the regular school day.
- The Transport Committee will accept no financial responsibility for student transport, or variations to approved transport, if there has not been written approval for that transport.
- All requests for special needs bus contract services and taxi travel must be considered by the Transport Committee and approval received, prior to implementation.

TRANSPORT OPTIONS:

- Parent/carer transport
- Parent transport with conveyance allowance for eligible parents, endorsed by support school principal in conjunction with the Inclusion and Access Coordinator and/or Learning Services
- Regular Metro bus services
- Regular school bus contract services
- Special school bus contracts (The Department of Transport funds these services. Bus assistants are provided on some of these services)
- Taxi travel (Taxi travel may be negotiated as a short term option in extreme circumstances, when none of the above can be arranged, dependent on available resources)

PROCESS:

1. DoE staff will liaise with parents of students with disability who wish to request transport assistance
2. Support service staff must assess the level of transport independence of eligible students who are seeking transport assistance (see attached criteria Appendix One).
3. Support staff will meet with the parent/carer to ascertain the student needs. The Transport Guidelines state that the parents have primary responsibility for student transport. The capacity of the parents to provide this transport with the normal conveyance allowance (from the Department of Transport) is to be determined. The reasons for the parent not being able to provide this transport must be clearly obtained (complete form in Appendix Three).
4. In the case of students who meet the eligibility criteria for enrolment in special schools, the principal (or nominee) is responsible for undertaking the Transport Assistance forms with parents/caregiver
5. These transport options (in order of priority) must be locked in to by Support Staff
   - regular school bus contract services (check with school what is available)
   - regular Metro bus services
   - special needs bus contracts (Details of these services and routes can be obtained from the Inclusion and Access Coordinator).

Where possible, the above bus services must be used.

- Taxi travel (a last resort) for use in extreme circumstances. If this is required, please contact the Inclusion and Access Coordinator and indicate the needs. Where possible, group taxi transport will be organised.
SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIALIST TRANSPORT NEEDS (I.E. WHEELCHAIR, HARNESSES)

- Please note that the submission must include an occupational therapy prescription and report for any new student travelling who requires specialist equipment (please complete form in Appendix Four and Five)
- Students travelling in wheelchairs must have a headrest, a lap or lap sash belt restraint and 4-point restraint system for their wheelchair.
- For any OH&S concerns, please seek advice from the treating therapist or Inclusion and Access Coordinator

TRAVEL PLAN:

- It is required that students requesting transport assistance have a travel plan in place, as part of the Learning Plan process. This plan will also include a program of travel training, as appropriate.
- It is recognised for students at Level 5 and 6 travel training may not be possible.
- Students who meet the eligibility criteria for enrolment in a special school, for whom travel training is not appropriate, are exempt from this requirement.

PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Parents/caregivers should understand that where special transport assistance is approved it is to a single nominated residence, and is conditional upon their:

- being present at pick up and set down times unless they have made other agreed arrangements;
- notifying the transport provider, in advance of pick-up, when student will not require transport. You must do this the day prior or prior to 7.00am on that morning. Text messages are an acceptable form of communicating an absence to the driver, please ensure you have their phone number once approved for transport assistance.
- conveying their child between the residence and the special transport vehicle at the pick-up and set down times, if necessary;
- giving notice to the principal of variations likely to occur in their child’s school attendance pattern e.g. extended illness;
- cooperating in the review, at least annually, of continuing eligibility for student access to special transport;
- supporting in-transit behaviour requirements and their implementation if necessary; and
- active pursuit of a travel training program for the students, where appropriate, both to and from school.

Transport Assistance may be withdrawn if these parental/carer responsibilities are not met.

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT:

- Only approved Year 13 students will receive transport assistance to and from a Senior Secondary site. These students must make application to the Moderation Committee, Severe Disability Register, for a Year 13 of schooling.
- Individual transport will not be provided to facilitate part-time attendance or alternate programs.
- Students being transported to 2 schools must be formally dual enrolled.
- Taxi transport will not be provided for transport to and from respite, school excursions or therapy program.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require more information, please contact:

- The Principal of your school in the first instance
- Manager, Disability Services; disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au

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Version 1
## APPENDIX THREE: APPLICATION FOR TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

### APPLICATION FORM
TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Birth:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Status:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Hours (Start/Finish times):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. distance from School:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/ Guardian Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Contact No:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative Contact No:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Grandparent/family friend)</td>
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### TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS

**Level of Transport Independence** *(see ratings in Appendix One)*

Please circle below:

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

**Special Transport Needs** *(E.g. wheelchair, harnesses etc)*

Please note that this submission must include an occupational therapy prescription and report for any new student travelling who requires specialist equipment (or a new prescription if anything has changed).

Students travelling in wheelchairs must have a headrest, a lap or lap sash belt restraint and 4-point restraint system for the wheelchair.

For any OH&S concerns, please seek advice from the treating therapist or Inclusion and Access Coordinator.

Please give details *(e.g. travels in wheelchair / can transfer to seat / EZ On Vest required)*
## TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Current transport arrangements *(please detail how your child currently travels from home to school to home)*

Transport assistance requested *(see Options; please include the days/time of day transport is requested)*

Reason for family not being able to provide transport for their child at present *(include a timeframe for review)*

If student has a dual enrolment, please also detail where this is, and how transport will occur to the neighbourhood school.

Is there a travelling plan in place?  No  Yes  *(Please attach)*

## SIGNATURES

Name and contact number of parent/caregiver making this application:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Contact number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Name and contact number of school staff/Principal assisting in this transport application:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Contact number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### APPENDIX FOUR: THERAPIST RESPONSIBILITIES

#### THERAPIST TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING REGARDING TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name:</th>
<th>School:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle registration:</td>
<td>Vehicle type:</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### WHEELCHAIR RELATED REQUIREMENTS (COMPLETE IF APPLICABLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wheelchair model</th>
<th>Wheelchair restraints:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you identified 4 anchor points on the wheelchair base? (fixed structures on the base of the chair)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the restraints and anchor points appear compatible?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the wheelchair have a headrest?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of the maintenance needs of the wheelchair?</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### SPECIALISED CHILD SEATS

| | No | Yes | Comments: |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Is the child seat approved for use in a vehicle? (If not, has the system been approved by the RACT?) | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the eye level of the child below the top of the child seat? (If no, the seat is not suitable) | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the angle of the seat belt no greater than 45 degrees? | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the child’s weight within the weight limits of the harness/restraint? | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the harness being used with an approved lap belt? | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the lap belt positioned low across the hips? (so that it does not exert any force on the soft tissue area of the pelvis) | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the crotch strap comfortable for the child? | No | Yes | Comments: |
| If a buckle cover is required for behavioral reasons has RTA approval been obtained? | No | Yes | Comments: |
| If additional padding is used to provide specific positioning, is the padding firm and weighing under 2kgs? (high density foam is allowable) | No | Yes | Comments: |
| Is the restraint unmodified? | No | Yes | Comments: |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapist name:</th>
<th>Discipline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
<td>Date completed:</td>
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APPENDIX FIVE: THERAPIST TRANSPORT REQUEST/SUPPORT

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<tr>
<td>School:</td>
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<td>Date:</td>
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<tr>
<th>STUDENT REQUIREMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seating arrangement in vehicle (e.g. wheelchair restraint, occupant restraint, safety harness, buckle cover)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please detail ALL requirements:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional equipment (e.g. wheelchair tray, bag etc)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Please detail:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Action Plan attached?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>----</td>
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<tr>
<th>VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please detail vehicle requirements to transport this student (e.g. tracking, vehicle access – hoist, ramps, storage etc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Therapist name:</th>
<th>Discipline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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