

Standing on Buses Policy

Responsibility of:
Effective Date:

Public Transport Division
May 2017

TRIM File:
Version No:

DDOT2015/0328~0019
4

Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide **safe, efficient, effective and sustainable** school bus transport.

Safety is the primary objective of the Territory school bus network.

Efficiency is achieved by maximising the number of passengers able to be safely carried on a school bus service.

Effective and **sustainable** networks provide transport options to as many students and schools that can be serviced in accordance with, and consideration of, the following strategic network design principles:

- *Density of demand:* network resources are allocated to meet areas with a high density of demand (i.e. the concentration of students requiring school bus transport in an area).
- *Availability of alternatives:* network resource allocation avoids duplication of existing public or school bus service provision.
- *School location:* network resources are primarily allocated to meet transport demand to the nearest appropriate primary, middle or senior school. Connections to other schools are facilitated where possible.

Policy

This policy applies to student travel on school bus services operated by contractors on behalf of the Northern Territory Government.

Drivers should not carry more passengers than the licensed carrying capacity of the bus they are operating.

School buses operating in urban areas, or on routes not deemed 'high risk', are permitted to carry standing passengers and/or passengers not wearing seatbelts in accordance with the licensed carrying capacity of the vehicle they are operating.

High risk school bus routes are not permitted to carry standing passengers and/or passengers not wearing seatbelts in accordance with the licensed carrying capacity of the vehicle they are operating.

Drivers are exempt from the general responsibility to ensure passengers are wearing seat belts. However, where possible, Drivers are expected to instruct passengers to be seated and utilise available seatbelts in accordance with this Policy.

Risk Assessment

All school bus routes were risk assessed in 2007 and categorised into three Northern Territory Risk Environments. These Risk Environments were adapted from the *ATC National Framework for Risk Assessment of School Bus Routes*.

The Northern Territory Risk Environments continue to be used today to ensure students have access to seatbelts on high risk routes of travel. The criteria for the three Risk Environments are detailed below. In this Policy, all Environment 3 school routes are classified as 'high risk'.

Environment 1

- Urban/semi urban;
- Speed limits not above 80km/h on undivided roads;
- Speed limits not above 100km/h on divided roads;
- Typically shorter routes (less than 60 minutes).

Examples include Casuarina Interchange to Darwin High School and Palmerston Interchange to O'Loughlin College.

Environment 2

- Rural;
- Significant travel on undivided roads with speed limits of at least 80km/h;
- Significant travel on divided roads with speed limits up to 100km/h;
- Some travel on unsealed roads;
- Typically 30 to 60 minutes journey time.

Examples include Noonamah Store to Palmerston Interchange and Amoonguna to the Milner Interchange in Alice Springs.

Environment 3

- Rural;
- Speed limits over 100km/h with at least some time on undivided roads;
- Speed limits over 80km/h with more than half on undivided roads;
- Significant travel on unsealed roads;
- Typically longer routes (up to 90 minutes travel time).

Examples include Pine Creek to Katherine and Corroboree Park to Humpty Doo.

Driver procedures when operating at capacity

Drivers are expected to safely carry passengers in accordance with the licensed carrying capacity of the vehicle they are operating. On occasion a bus will reach its carrying capacity prior to completing the service. The following procedures should be followed when a bus has reached its capacity (i.e. the bus is full and is carrying 100% of its licensed capacity).

The Driver should immediately inform a Supervisor as soon as the bus is at capacity and additional student/s wish to board.

If supervised by a parent, carer or teacher: students and accompanying supervising adult are to be advised by the Driver that the bus cannot carry any more passengers.

If the student is unsupervised: the Driver should inform a Supervisor of the issue and await direction. Resolution of the issue is at the discretion of the Supervisor and Driver whilst ensuring that, under no circumstances, a student is to be left unsupervised. If operating in an area that this Policy requires the use of seatbelts, and there are no reasonable solutions available, the supervisor and Driver may permit students to stand in accordance with the licensed carrying capacity of the vehicle.

The bus contractor should inform Public Transport of any school bus network capacity issues as soon as possible.

Determining Passenger Standing Capacity

All motor vehicles designed and built for use in the Australian market must comply with relevant State and Territory legislation. Legislation and the Australian Design Rules cover vehicle dimensions such as the maximum length, width, height and mass.

The configuration and year of manufacture of the bus will determine the installation of seatbelts and the maximum number of passengers it can safely carry. The maximum number of standees allowed on a bus is determined by formulas applied on the available floor space of a bus.

Bus Carrying Capacity Information

All public and school buses will display signage to indicate the passenger carrying capacity of the bus, which may include seating and standing capacity. This sign will be displayed at the entrance of the bus.

'2 for 3' seating

'2 for 3' seating is permitted on school buses that comply with the *"2 for 3" Bus Seat Exemption*.

A '2 for 3 seat' means a double seat, consisting of two adult seating positions, that incorporates an additional centre seating position with a lap sash seat belt fitted within the two original seating positions and which has been shown to comply with the applicable vehicle standards in this configuration for occupation of each of the three seating positions by a child weighing no more than 38 kilograms.

Performance Measurement

Performance will be measured through the Customer Feedback System and through regular communications with bus contractors.

For additional information, please contact the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics on 8924 7666 or visit www.nt.gov.au/publictransport