



# Transport Policy

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that students and families understand the transport process at Victorian College for the Deaf.
- Detail the roles and responsibilities of the school, Student Transport Unit, 13cabs, student, and student's family.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Victorian College for the Deaf.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [Students with Disabilities Transport Program \(SDTP\)](#) policy, and [Conveyance Allowance Program](#) policy.

## DEFINITIONS

*Student Transport Unit* – the Department of Education and Training faculty responsible for implementing and administering the Students with Disabilities Transport Program (STDP).

*Conveyance Allowance Unit* – the Department of Education and Training faculty responsible for administering conveyance allowance applications and claims.

*13cabs* – the service provider for all taxi services at Victorian College for the Deaf, and employer of all drivers and supervisors.

*Pick up location* – the designated location that a student is picked up and dropped off by the taxi service, and handed out of/into the care of a parent/guardian.

## POLICY

### Eligibility

To be eligible for access to transport assistance, students must:

- Be eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)
- Reside in the school's designated transport area (VCD currently does not have a DTA)
- Reside more than 4.8km from the school
- Be enrolled for three or more days a week
- Be of school age and reside in Victoria

Any changes to a student's eligibility may result in the loss of transport assistance.

For more information on eligibility, see the [Students with Disabilities Transport Program \(SDTP\)](#) policy.

### Applications for transport assistance

Applications for transport assistance are available online. Victorian College for the Deaf will assist families with applications. All applications for transport assistance must be endorsed by the Principal. The application is then sent to the Student Transport Unit for approval. The Student Transport Unit may take up to 15 business days to approve or deny an application.

Applications for transport assistance must be made on a yearly basis, or if a student moves address and requires a new transport access point.

[Application form for transport assistance](#)

### **Types of transport assistance**

#### *Conveyance allowance – myki card*

Students could receive funding for a myki card to cover the cost of travelling to and from school on public transport.

#### *Conveyance allowance – private car travel*

Students could receive funding to contribute towards the cost of a parent/carer transporting them to and from school independently.

#### *Group taxi*

Students could be eligible to travel to school on a group taxi funded by the Department of Education and Training.

Once the school has determined that transport is required, together the principal, family and Student Transport Unit (STU) will determine the most appropriate form of transport assistance for the student. Determining the type of travel assistance must be made considering the nature of the child's disability and, if possible, link to the student's learning plan with the view to developing life-long skills. In some cases travel arrangements may be a combination of travel assistance. [STDP Policy](#)

## **Group taxi travel**

### **Pick up locations (post 2019)**

Following the Specialist School Transport Review in 2019, Victorian College for the Deaf accepted a number of recommendations set out by the Department of Education and Training. This included moving taxi pick-ups to neutral locations, rather than pick-ups from home addresses.

Existing students receiving a home pick-up prior to the review are to be 'grandfathered' out, either as students move home address (and transition to a neutral pick-up location) or conclude their use of the taxi service.

Once a student's eligibility for travel assistance has been confirmed, the school will work with 13cabs to determine an appropriate pick up location for the student to access the taxi service. This may mean accessing an existing stop within 4.8km of the student's home address. Where no existing stop is feasible, a new pick-up location may be created. Suitable pick-up locations can be suggested by the principal in consultation with 13cabs and, where required, the Student Transport Unit.

13cabs will advise locations based on minimal impact to the existing route and ability for the students to safely embark and disembark.

Taxis are confined to a run time, meaning they are unable to commence prior to 7:00am. Due to these restrictions, students who live in the outers of metropolitan Melbourne may not be able to access a pick-up location within 4.8km of their home address. In this case, students may access the closest *existing* pick-up location on the taxi run, and apply for another form of transport assistance (e.g. conveyance allowance) for the remainder of their journey.

### **Exemptions**

Exemptions to the above process are examined on a case by case basis by the principal.

Parents/guardians may submit an application to the principal outlining the reasons their child requires an exemption. If the principal supports the application, the school will make an application on behalf of the child to the Special Cases panel. Please note, the Special Cases panel meet approximately once a term.

### **Conditions of travel**

Students and parents/guardians must adhere to the conditions of travel as outlined in the [Application form for transport assistance](#).

### **Supervisors**

The role of the supervisor is to provide duty of care for students while on board the taxi. Supervisors must follow the emergency management plan and support the enforcement of the mobile phone policy as required. Supervisors are employed by 13cabs, however they report to the college principal.

### **Emergency management**

Victorian College for the Deaf implements a detailed emergency management plan for taxi transport. The plan is shared with the Student Transport Unit, 13cabs, all drivers and supervisors, and staff at the college. The emergency management plan is reviewed on a yearly basis.

### **Seatbelts and safety modifications**

Students must wear a seatbelt at all times while on board the taxi. Any additional safety equipment (e.g. car seats and booster seats) are to be supplied by the parent/guardian as required.

### **Non-attendance**

If a child is not present at their designated pick up location at the allocated time, the taxi driver is authorised to wait five minutes for them to arrive. After five minutes, if the child has not arrived, the taxi driver must continue with their journey. This protocol ensures that other students on the taxi run are not impacted by an extended run time and delivered late to school.

### **Mobile phones and devices**

Students are not permitted to use mobile phones and devices with internet connectivity on the taxi service. They must be handed to the supervisor upon boarding the vehicle. Devices without internet connectivity (such as an iPad) are permitted. Please refer to the school's Mobile Phone Policy and Personal Property Policy for more information.

### **Non-scheduled stops**

Non-scheduled stops should not occur unless in an emergency (refer to Emergency Management Plan). Non-scheduled stops that are not the result of an emergency, e.g. a student needs to use the bathroom, should be strongly avoided. All students are advised to use the toilet before boarding the taxi service. In the rare event that a student must use the bathroom during the taxi run, the driver is permitted to pull over at an appropriate service station. The supervisor will accompany a minimum of two students while the driver supervises the remaining students in the vehicle. The supervisor must sweep the bathroom, exit the bathroom, then allow the student to enter.

The school must be informed of any non-scheduled stops.

### **Covid-19**

Students must not travel on the taxi service if unwell. Students who develop Covid-19 symptoms during the school day are not allowed to catch the taxi service home. This rule is in place to prevent

the transmission of illness between students on the taxi service. Further Covid-19 protocols are outlined in the Schools Operations Guide.

### **Communication**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to raise any questions or concerns regarding transport with the school.

Parents/guardians are welcome to exchange phone numbers with their child's taxi driver and supervisor if they wish. The purpose of doing so is to communicate to the driver when your child will not be on taxi. Please raise questions or concerns directly to the principal.

## **Conveyance allowance**

### **Myki**

Students who meet the eligibility requirements for STDP and are travelling to school independently on public transport may seek transport assistance in the form of a yearly/half-yearly myki pass. Traditionally, families are required to purchase the myki pass and submit the receipt to the school with additional required documentation. The school will send the application to the Conveyance Allowance team in the Department of Education and Training.

In recognition of the significant up-front cost to families, Victorian College for the Deaf offer to act as an agent on behalf of the family. Offered in February (for yearly tickets) and July (for half yearly tickets), the school will purchase the myki on behalf of the student, and seek reimbursement through the Conveyance Allowance Unit. Families must submit all necessary documentation prior to the advertised cut off dates.

Applications for conveyance allowance must be made yearly, and changes in a student's eligibility (see *eligibility*) may impact their application status.

### **Lost or stolen mykis**

Myki cards are the responsibility of students and families. Students are given information on how to register their myki cards online, and are encouraged to do so with assistance from their families. This will ensure that if their myki card is lost or stolen, it can be replaced. Victorian College for the Deaf cannot take responsibility for lost or stolen mykis.

### **Private car travel**

If families wish to transport their child to school themselves, they could be eligible to receive a conveyance allowance – funding to put towards petrol and car expenses. Funding is determined based on the distance from the child's residential address to the school.

Conveyance allowance may also be sought by families if they are driving their child *over* 4.8km to their nearest taxi pick up location. Conveyance allowance funding rates can be found here: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/conveyance-allowance/guidance/conveyance-allowance-rates>

## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to the school community via:

- School website

- Staff induction and handbook

## MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [Students with Disabilities Transport Program \(SDTP\)](#)
- [Conveyance Allowance Program](#)
- Victorian College for the Deaf's [Mobile Phone Policy](#)

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and is scheduled for review in January 2025.

This policy does not require school council approval. It was endorsed by the School Improvement Team (SIT) and the Principal on: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022

