



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

School Transport Roles and Responsibilities Guide for Māori-medium schools

Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital
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1. Overview

Purpose and scope

This document outlines roles and responsibilities for the administration and delivery of Māori-medium school (MMS) school transport assistance.

Background

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has been managing the transport of students to and from school for over 130 years. While caregivers are ultimately responsible for transporting their children to and from school, the Ministry offers assistance to students where distance, mobility or other issues create barriers to accessing an appropriate learning environment.

The Ministry assists over 100,000 students to get to and from school safely each school day and oversees around 40 million passenger journeys every year.

Services

The Ministry delivers school transport assistance through the following services (covered in this document):

Māori-Medium Schools (MMS)	Bulk funding provided directly to kura that have a designated character under Section 204 of the Education and Training Act 2020 and provides a Kaupapa Māori education (for example, Kura Kaupapa Māori, Kura-a-iwi or Wharekura).
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The Ministry also delivers transport assistance through the following services and funding mechanisms (not covered in this document):

Daily School Bus	The Ministry contracts directly with transport providers to provide transport assistance between schools and designated bus stops within a defined proximity to student's homes.
Technology School Bus	The Ministry contracts directly with transport providers to provide transport assistance between schools to enable Year 7 and 8 students to access technical education facilities.
Directly Resourced (DR)	Bulk funding provided directly to schools to provide transport assistance for their students within defined parameters.
Specialised School Transport Assistance (SESTA)	Transport assistance for children and young people with safety and/or mobility needs that prevent them from travelling independently to and from the nearest appropriate school.
Conveyance Allowance (CA)	Payments made by the Ministry directly to caregivers to contribute towards the cost of transportation. A conveyance allowance is only paid to eligible students who live more than 2.4km from a Ministry-funded Daily School Bus or Directly Resourced school bus route.

Please refer to the Ministry of Education [website](#) for up-to-date information on Daily School Bus, Technology School Bus, DR, SESTA, and CA.

Eligibility criteria for MMS funding

To be eligible for Māori-medium school transport assistance funding, kura must have a designated character under Section 204 of the Education and Training Act 2020 and provide a kaupapa Māori education (for example, Kura Kaupapa Māori, Kura-a-iwi or Wharekura).

Eligible kura will receive funding for each enrolled ākonga that:

1. Lives at least 3.2km (Years 1-8) or 4.8km (Years 9-13) from their kura, and
2. Is enrolled in level 1 or 2 Māori Language Immersion.

Funding is paid to kura boards quarterly in advance and are reviewed on an annual basis. Kura are required to use this funding to provide school transport assistance to all eligible ākonga.

Responsibilities at a glance

Responsibility	Ministry	MMS schools*	Whānau
Policy	✓		
Funding agreement preparation and management	✓		
Calculating and making MMS funding payments to kura	✓		
Eligibility assessment and advice	✓	✓	
Service design, validation, and review		✓	
Contracts for service and contract variations		✓	
Safe siting of bus stops or pick-up/drop-off (PUDO) points		✓	
Communication with whānau and ākonga		✓	
Ensuring ākonga get safely to and from PUDO points			✓
Addressing ākonga behaviour issues		✓	✓
Health and safety	✓	✓	✓
Emergency and incident management		✓	
Auditing and monitoring supplier performance		✓	

* While MMS kura can contract a transport service provider to deliver transport services, they cannot contract out of their health and safety Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) obligations

All groups involved in the provision and management of school transport services have responsibilities and obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and it is each party's responsibility to understand and act on these obligations while taking all practicable and reasonable steps to mitigate risks to health and safety.

2. Ministry

Overview

To deliver on its school transport assistance mandate, the Ministry has a School Transport business unit. School Transport sits within the Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko – Infrastructure & Digital (TPHM) group of the Ministry.

Key responsibilities of the Ministry's School Transport business unit with respect to MMS funding include:

- managing funding agreements with kura
- determining the value of funding payments and making payments to kura.

Key roles

The following Ministry roles are involved in the administration and delivery of school transport funding and services:

Role	Responsibilities	Key relationships
Regional Transport Advisor (RTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual review of funding based on eligible ākonga• Provide advice on Ministry School Transport Assistance policy, eligibility, and delivery models• Respond to school enquiries	MMS
Transport Contract Manager (TCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor legislative and contractual compliance and safety• Ensure that kura are complying with their funding agreement• Provide assistance and guidance regarding the kura obligations under the funding agreement	MMS
Transport Coordinators and Transport Officers (TCOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process and quality-check payments to kura• Respond to customer enquiries	MMS

MMS eligibility assessment and funding calculation

The level of MMS funding a kura receives is based on a per- ākonga rate for each eligible ākonga and is calculated in accordance with the Ministry's funding formula for Māori medium kura.

In March of each year the Ministry works with kura to review their current eligible ākonga numbers.

Eligible ākonga must live at least 3.2km (Years 1-8) or 4.8km (Years 9-13) from their attending kura.

Any changes in funding as a result of the ākonga eligibility review take effect from Quarter Two (April).

The per-student rates used in the MMS funding formula are also reviewed annually. The rate review considers changes in transport costs and takes account of the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency index data and processes to calculate any adjustment for movements of input costs. Any changes in funding as a result of the rate review take effect in Quarter Three (July).

Kura may request the Ministry undertakes an out of cycle funding review once in any 24-month period if:

- there is a significant change in eligible ākonga; and
- it has been at least six months since the last funding review by the Ministry.

All requests for funding reviews must be made via their local Regional Transport Advisor.

Please refer to the Ministry of Education [website](#) for up-to-date information on the MMS funding formula and rates.

Safety and compliance

The TCMs are regionally based staff responsible for ensuring that the kura deliver on their safety and legislative obligations. They provide guidance and assistance in this area and will proactively engage with kura to ensure they meet their obligations as a PCBU as defined by Worksafe and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

3. Kura

Overview

MMS kura are funded to provide transport assistance to eligible ākonga. How they provide that assistance is at the discretion of the kura receiving the funding. Assistance can be through a place on a vehicle provided by a transport service provider/kura, or by financial assistance provided direct to whānau.

The kura also act as the first point of contact for whānau and ākonga for School Transport Assistance, eligibility, safety and other enquiries. Kura are responsible for assessing ākonga eligibility, coordinating and creating documented procedures for vehicle loading and unloading and maintaining regular communication with all other parties.

All kura receiving funding for transport assistance are responsible for:

- complying with the funding agreement with the Ministry
- ensuring services are safe
- ensuring all eligible ākonga at their kura receive transport assistance
- procuring and managing contracts required for the provision of transport services
- providing access and information for compliance checks by the Ministry
- reporting all incidents and accidents involving school transport vehicles to the Ministry
- advising whānau and ākonga of the School Transport Assistance eligibility criteria and communicating other relevant information as required
- maintaining accurate and up-to-date lists of eligible ākonga
- providing ākonga data to School Transport upon request
- promoting safe behaviour and working with Transport Service Providers (TSPs) and drivers to address ākonga behaviour issues as needed
- ensuring processes are in place for safe loading and unloading of ākonga and ensuring that kura PUDOs are clear and accessible
- advising whānau of any changes to the assistance provided

This is a reference guide only, and kura should refer to their funding agreement in the first instance for a complete and accurate account of their responsibilities and obligations.

Key responsibilities

Kura have responsibilities for the coordination and delivery of MMS school transport assistance, summarised as follows:

Type	Responsibilities
Procurer/provider of transport services	<p>Where a kura arranges the provision of school transport services they are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure everything reasonably practicable is being done to ensure the services are operated safely• notify all relevant parties in the event of an incident or emergency• prepare incident reports and submit to the Ministry• report to the Ministry on the services provided• if services are outsourced:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ run a contestable process when procuring services○ supply an after-hours contact phone number to the transport provider
Engagement with whānau and ākonga	<p>Kura maintain the relationship with whānau and ākonga. When providing school transport assistance kura must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• act as the first point of contact for whānau and ākonga for all school transport enquiries, including eligibility• assess ākonga eligibility using Ministry criteria• maintain accurate, up-to-date lists of ākonga who receive assistance from the funding provided• supervise transport loading and unloading and create a documented procedure for loading and unloading• inform whānau of changes to school transport assistance, including changes to timetables, routes and stops• clearly communicate expectations for appropriate behaviour on school transport services to whānau and ākonga.

Single point of contact for school transport

All kura that receive a Ministry-funded school transport service must appoint a permanent member of staff (such as the Principal or a teacher) to serve as a single point of contact for their kura on their school transport.

Providing safe services

Through assuming the responsibility to provide school transport assistance to ākonga, kura also take on the responsibility to ensure any assistance they are involved in providing is safe. MMS kura must have robust health and safety plans in place and must demonstrate clear and appropriate systems and standards for mitigating risks to health and safety.

Appropriate safety planning includes ensuring that the transport services provided use safe PUDO locations along the route and that these locations are fit for purpose. In deciding on the location of PUDO locations, transport providers and kura should refer to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's Guidelines for Safe Siting of School Bus Stops: nzta.govt.nz/resources/siting-school-bus-stops. Kura and transport providers should also establish appropriate procedures for vehicle stopping and unloading.

Procuring services

Where a kura outsources the provision of any part of the school transport services they provide, they are required by the funding agreement to carry out the procurement of the services in accordance with the following criteria:

- The process must be contestable and transparent
- If the total budget exceeds \$100,000 it must be advertised on GETS
- Any conflicts of interest must be managed.

Useful information to comply with these criteria can be found here:

- *Financial Information for Schools Handbook*: <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Financial-Information-for-Schools-Handbook-2019.pdf>
- *Procurement Guidance for Public Entities*: <http://www.oag.govt.nz/2008/procurement-guide/>.
- *Government Procurement Rules*: <https://www.procurement.govt.nz/procurement/principles-charter-and-rules/government-procurement-rules/getting-started/>

Providing eligibility advice

Kura should be familiar with the eligibility criteria for School Transport Assistance and prepared to answer enquiries from whānau and ākonga regarding eligibility. Refer to the Ministry's [website](#) for up-to-date information on eligibility for MMS School Transport Assistance

In most cases, kura will be able to determine eligibility for school transport assistance. In particularly complex cases, kura should seek the Ministry's advice by contacting their local Regional Transport Advisor.

Services for eligible ākonga

Kura who accept MMS funding are responsible for delivering safe and reliable services or a transport allowance for all eligible ākonga. When services are provided, they must be delivered in line with appropriate legislation and the funding agreement with the Ministry.

If the assistance is provided by way of a place on a vehicle, then no eligible ākonga is to be charged for that transport.

Services for ineligible ākonga

Kura may arrange the delivery of school transport assistance to ineligible ākonga, using their funding, provided that such assistance does not disadvantage eligible ākonga. Kura may charge ineligible ākonga a fare.

Maintaining lists of eligible and ineligible ākonga

All kura receiving MMS funding are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date lists of all ākonga who receive assistance from the funding provided and for providing ākonga data to the Ministry when requested.

Communicating with whānau and ākonga

Kura are responsible for notifying whānau and ākonga of:

- the transport assistance they provide
- transport service information such as route name, transport route, PUDOs and travel times
- changes to routes or stops
- safety rules around PUDO
- behavioural expectations
- safety information and caregiver/whanau responsibilities.

Kura should provide as much notice as possible to whānau prior to the implementation of any changes.

Supervising transport loading and unloading

Kura have a responsibility to support a safe environment for loading and unloading on kura grounds. To ensure safe procedures are in place during PUDOs, kura should:

- create documented processes for safe loading and unloading of ākonga
- choose a safe PUDO location at the kura
- supervise loading and unloading every afternoon and every morning
- control traffic on kura property (when necessary) and guide the driver safely through the loading zone
- communicate clear instructions for safe loading and unloading to ākonga (including how to safely store bags – on laps, or under the seat in front)
- remind whānau of their responsibilities for ensuring ākonga safety (e.g., not parking in vehicle bays, adhering to the speed limit of 20 km/h on either side of the road while passing a stationary school bus) and issuing guidelines as necessary
- work collaboratively and proactively with transport providers to address safety hazards.

Managing ākonga behaviour on school transport

Kura must clearly communicate expectations of acceptable standards of ākonga behaviour and take appropriate steps to manage any unsafe or inappropriate behaviour, as in any other area of kura life. (See the Ākonga and Whānau section for more information on expectations for ākonga behaviour.)

Where an ākonga behaviour presents an ongoing or serious problem, the kura may decide to revoke the offer of a place on funded transport. This may be a temporary or permanent measure, depending on the circumstances and at the discretion of the kura. If an ākonga loses their place on funded school transport, the whānau needs to ensure they are meeting their legal obligation to get their child to kura. In this scenario, whānau are not entitled to a Conveyance Allowance paid by the Ministry of Education.

Kura may choose to establish a Code of Conduct, signed by the ākonga, their caregiver/whanau, the kura and the TSP (if any). A sample Code of Conduct can be found on the Ministry's [website](#).

Incident and emergency management

In the event of an accident or incident involving school transport, all kura should offer information and support to ākonga and whānau as necessary during and after an incident or emergency.

Kura are also required to report accidents or incidents on school transport services provided under the funding agreement to the Ministry.

Key contacts for kura

Enquiries regarding transport services provided to kura should be directed to the Ministry's Regional Transport Advisors. Please visit the Ministry's [website](#) for up-to-date contact information.

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4. Ākonga and whānau

Overview

Whānau are ultimately responsible for getting their children to kura. However, the Ministry may provide school transport assistance to help ākonga overcome barriers to education due to distance or accessibility.

Eligibility

Whānau should contact their kura to confirm whether their child is eligible for school transport assistance and the type of assistance that is offered.

Safety and behaviour

To ensure a safe environment for loading and unloading, whānau should:

- not park in bus bays
- adhere to the speed limit (**20 km/h while passing a stationary school bus** on either side of the road)
- try to eliminate the need for tamariki to cross the road
- ensure tamariki get to and from the bus stop safely
- teach tamariki not to run across the road.

Whānau should encourage their tamariki to follow these safety and behaviour guidelines throughout their journey.

Safety and behaviour tips for ākonga

Kerb drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a safe place to cross. • Take one step back from the curb. • Look in all directions and listen for traffic. • If traffic is coming, wait for it to pass, then look and listen again. • When there is no traffic, walk quickly across and be alert to any changes.
Boarding the school bus/van	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early. • Stand five giant steps away from the kerb. • Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says it's okay before stepping onto the bus. • Board the bus one at a time. • Be patient – no pushing. • Find a seat and sit down straight away. • Put your bag and anything you're carrying on your lap or under the seat in front of you.
Behaviour on the school bus/van	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow all instructions from the driver • No eating, drinking, smoking or vaping on the bus. • Once seated, stay seated. • When seated, put your bag on your lap or under your seat. • If standing, hold on to a seat handle or rail for support. • If standing, stay behind the driver. • Keep your voices low so the driver is not distracted. • Keep the inside of the bus clean and damage free.
Leaving the school bus/van	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait for the bus to stop before making your way to the door. • Leave the bus one at a time – no pushing. • Wait well back from the road until the bus has gone and you can see clearly. • Always use your kerb drill before crossing the road.

Conditions of carriage

Ākonga are expected to comply with the behaviour guidelines above and any code of conduct or conditions of carriage issued by the kura or any transport provider.

If an ākonga behaviour is disruptive or poses a safety risk, the kura will take appropriate steps to manage this behaviour, and the ākonga could lose their place on the school bus/van (please note if the driver judges that it is no longer safe to continue the route, the kura or the Police will be contacted to remove the ākonga from the

bus/van). If an ākonga loses their place on the school bus/van, the caregiver needs to ensure they are meeting their legal obligation to get their child to kura. Whānau are not entitled to a Conveyance Allowance paid by the Ministry in this situation.

Key contacts for whānau

Enquiries regarding	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligibility• Assistance provided• Where a funded vehicle is provided:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport routes• Pick up/drop-off points• Timetables	Your kura