

Impact of Student Transport Assistance Policy on Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) services

CAHS Client Transport Policy advises the below:

Transporting School Health Clients

☑ *School Principals have a responsibility to ensure that first aid and, if necessary, transport to a medical facility can be provided to any student, member of staff or visitor during any school activity on or off school grounds.*

☑ *If a school health client requires transport for medical assessment or treatment, the following must be considered:*

o If emergency care is required, an ambulance should be called.

o If the care required is not urgent, the parent (and in some cases a mature school health client) is responsible for organising and providing transport.

o If the School Principal (or delegate) elects to utilise an alternative form of transport, community health nurses are not permitted to provide transport either in a private or government vehicle, or to accompany the school health client in another vehicle.

- CACH school health nurses working in the role of Education Support Liaison, have noted that STAP does have an impact on the students and families they work with and on their ability to provide services.
- This is because there is a gap between the services STAP provides and students who fall outside the eligibility criteria but cannot access NDIS funding.
- This includes students with complex medical needs (including tracheostomy care, respiratory difficulties, behaviour management issues and complex seizures).

Impact on CACH staff:

- **Time spent-** on liaison and advocacy for students involving families and schools to try to improve health outcomes for students and families
- **Safety issues-** where students might be sent home without adequate or appropriate supervision for their needs- this presents a risk to the child, a risk to the person transporting the child and schools may use CACH staff to justify decision making around less than ideal transport of students, although responsibility for this rests with DOE as per above policy.

Free bus services are currently provided to support children accessing the Department of Education's Language Development Centres (LDCs). Feedback from consumers and staff indicates that the following would be of benefit to families to ensure there is equity in accessing LDCs:

- Flexibility to allow children residing outside designated bus route areas to access the bus service
- Ensuring adequate space on bus routes so that Kindergarten students (currently not prioritised the same as full-time students) do not have difficulty securing a bus place
- Flexibility to address clashes in pick-up and drop-off times for siblings attending other schools
- Simplifying the eligibility criteria and form for accessing the service