

Special Education school transport assistance

(SESTA)

Driver, CAREGIVER AND SCHOOL STAFF responsibilities & expectations

1. **Background**

This document is to assist the Ministry’s contractors by providing a list of minimum expectations of the SESTA drivers.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the contractor’s Health & Safety and Child Protection policies. All drivers must be aware of, and comply with, their obligations under those policies.

This document may be amended from time to time, and is available as a document download from the Ministry of Education’s website, or the Ministry’s School Transport Team at [school.transport@education.govt.nz](mailto:school.transport@education.govt.nz). It can be provided to schools and caregivers at any time.

1. **Expectations**

It is a contractual requirement that all SESTA services are assigned to dedicated drivers, and that those drivers will:

* + 1. Treat the student/s with respect and courtesy;
    2. Provide reliable and consistent services, that ensure the students are at and leave home/school/respite on time;
    3. Ensure that all vehicles are maintained in a clean and tidy manner;
    4. Ensure students who require assistance are supported by school staff or parents to move into and out of vehicles and to check the seatbelt is fastened. Students who use a wheelchair and who are able to transfer into a regular car seat may do so where this is practical as car seats are a safer option than wheelchair travel.
    5. Safely load, secure and unload equipment that will travel with the student.
    6. Ensure all students in a wheelchair who are transported in a hoist vehicle are secured in all of the following ways:

The wheelchair frame must be properly secured to the floor of the vehicle at four separate tie-down points

1. A vehicle seat belt must be fastened for the student travelling in their wheelchair. Although lap seatbelts are allowed, three point shoulder belts are a safer option and should always be used wherever upper seatbelt anchorages enable this to occur and it can be safely accommodated with the design of the wheelchair.

Any other personal positioning equipment required by the individual student for safe travel must also be in use

**NB**: The head supports, positioning belts and harnesses on a person's wheelchair are personal positioning devices. They are not vehicle crash restraints. Personal positioning devices should be used during travel but do not replace a legal vehicle seat belt and wheelchair tie-down.

* + 1. Any restraints used in the vehicle must comply with the installation instructions of the manufacturer (***Please note****: If this means modifying the vehicle or addressing an anchor point, this must be proven by a Low Volume Vehicle Certificating Plate or a Manufacturer’s Rating being displayed on the vehicle*);
    2. The driver and contractor will have contact with caregivers and students prior to introducing a new, or substantially changing a current, route or introducing a new driver;
    3. Maintain clear communication with families and schools;
    4. Familiarise themselves with the individual requirements of their students;
    5. Ensure all information relating to a student is kept confidential;
    6. Ensure that an adult is present when delivering a student to home/school/respite;
    7. If there is no adult present, unless the driver has express written permission to do otherwise, the driver is to advise the contractor. The student will then be returned to school or delivered to the nearest police station, or to an alternative address previously agreed to by the Ministry’s Service Agent;
    8. Ensure that all incidents, including any vehicle near misses, are reported to the contractor as soon as the driver can safely do so. The contractor will ensure that all incidents are reported as appropriate and detailed within the SESTA Services Agreement.
    9. SESTA drivers are required to complete, and maintain, basic First Aid skills. The provision of certified first aiders is a control measure for managing risk generally. However, administering medication is a specialised activity therefore drivers will not administer any medication.
    10. **Please Note**: If any incident involves the safety of a student, for instance in cases of medical or vehicle emergency, the driver must ensure that the vehicle is in a safe location and then immediately phone 111, and to then contact the contractor. It is the contractor’s responsibility to ensure that police/fire/ambulance have been contacted. As soon as possible the contractor must ensure that the school/s and caregiver/s, and the Service Agent and Ministry, are advised of the incident.

1. **Services Not to be Provided by SESTA Drivers**

Our obligations are to transport the student to school safely.

***Drivers will not:***

* + 1. Touch any student, except in cases of extreme unexpected emergency – where contact is unavoidable the driver must ensure that the incident is recorded in writing;
    2. Assist in the loading and unloading of a student into or out of a SESTA vehicle, apart from the necessary operation of the vehicle (e.g. activating the wheel chair hoist, securing the wheelchair tie-downs, opening the door and ensuring a step is available);
    3. Administer any medication;
    4. **Leave the vehicle unattended for any period of time.**

1. **Specialist Equipment (including standard seatbelts/harnesses)**

Some students may require specific equipment in transit. This equipment may be a special harness or restraint that has been purchased for the student or it could be the standard three-point seatbelt.

Drivers are required to:

* + 1. Ensure that the equipment is available whenever transport is required; and
    2. Ensure all guidelines regarding the safety of the equipment are followed; and
    3. Ensure that all seatbelts/restraints are worn correctly and remain fastened while the vehicle is in motion. For clarification, this does not mean that the driver will personally fasten the seatbelt/restraint, only that the driver is responsible for ensuring it is worn and remains fastened during the journey. Personally fastening any seatbelt (including wheelchair lap or shoulder belts) or harness is the responsibility of the caregiver or school staff; and
    4. Ensure that all equipment required for the safe transport of a Student (such as a web-slicer for the urgent removal of a harness) travel with the student and is stored securely in the Vehicle.

1. **Roles & Responsibility of the Caregiver**

The following information is provided to assist drivers and contractors to understand what may be reasonably expected from the caregivers.

Caregivers are:

* + 1. Responsible for advising the contractor and Service Agent when personal contact details change, i.e. changes to a phone number;
    2. Expected to work with the contractor and driver to ensure safe and appropriate student handovers;
    3. To ensure that the student has been toileted, and is ready to be collected, from the front entrance of their home at the agreed time;
    4. To ensure that the student has finished eating their breakfast prior to travelling;
    5. Responsible for ensuring that the vehicle collection/drop-off points have clear access;
    6. Responsible for informing the driver, contractor and school(s) if there have been any changes or events that may impact on student behaviour;
    7. Responsible for supplying the appropriate harnesses or legal restraints for students travelling in SESTA Vehicles. In some circumstances the Ministry may accept an application to fund the provision of a harness/restraint.
    8. Responsible for assisting students, where required, in and out of the vehicle and fastening the seat belt and any other personal positioning devices.
    9. **Responsible for being home to meet the student or SESTA vehicle both AM and PM.**

1. **Roles & Responsibility of early childhood and school staff**

Noting that a SESTA driver is expressly forbidden to touch any student, or leave the vehicle unattended, school and early childhood staff are to:

* + 1. Be present to assist in the loading and unloading of a student into or out of a SESTA vehicle, apart from the necessary operation of the vehicle (e.g. activating the wheel chair hoist, removing and attaching wheelchair tie-downs, opening the door and ensuring a step is available).
    2. Responsible for assisting students, where required, in and out of the vehicle and fastening the seat belt and any other personal positioning devices;
    3. To ensure that the student has been toileted, and is ready to be collected from agreed pick-up point at the agreed time;
    4. Responsible for informing the driver, caregiver, contractor and Service Agent if there have been any changes or events that may impact on student behaviour.