



Andrew Constance
Minister for Transport and Infrastructure

Adrian Piccoli
Minister for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

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SCHOOL STUDENTS TO TAP ONTO OPAL NEXT YEAR

More than 420,000 school students will be provided with an Opal card at the start of the 2016 school year so they can travel for free between home and school while accessing the ease and simplicity of the Opal electronic ticketing system.

Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Andrew Constance and Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli announced today that parents and students will be able to apply for a School Opal card and get information about the card from next week.

“More than 4 million Opal cards are already in use and now we’re expanding Opal to give school students the same kind of convenience from the start of the 2016 school year,” Mr Constance said.

Mr Piccoli described today as a win for school kids and families, with the travel program providing more than \$550 million to fund 80 million school trips each year.

“School travel assistance gets students from Kindergarten to year 12 to and from home safely and keeps cars off the road at busy peak periods,” Mr Piccoli said.

The School Opal card will be for travel within the Opal footprint covering schools and students travelling on public transport across Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hunter, Illawarra and Southern Highlands.

“We have more than 2,000 schools from the Public, Catholic and Independent sectors in the metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas whose students will be able to use an Opal card on trains, buses and ferries to get from home to school,” Mr Piccoli said.

“To make it easier for families, students who have a paper school pass this year will automatically be issued with an Opal card at their school from the start of term in 2016.”

Some parents and students will need to apply online for their School Opal card, which will be delivered in 2016. This includes parents who have children starting at kindergarten, moving from Year 2 to 3, starting high school, changing school or changing their address next year.

Parents and students who need to apply for a School Opal card can go to the website transportnsw.info/school-students from Monday 2 November.

**MEDIA: Josh Murphy | Minister Constance | 0409 086 207
Caelin Worthington | Minister Piccoli | 0437 427 445**

Fact sheet: School Opal card

The School Opal card provides free travel to school aged students between home and school on weekdays under the School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) across the Opal public transport network.

School Opal card can be used:

- On approved travel on school days between the student's home and school, and
- For travel between 06:30 and 19:00 weekdays (21:30 for TAFE school students).



Who is eligible?

To be eligible a student must be a resident of NSW plus:

- Infant student (K-2) older than 4 years and 6 months who lives any distance between home and school; or
- Primary student (Years 3-6) who lives more than 1.6km (straight line) from school, or 2.3km or more by the most direct practical walking route; or
- Secondary student (Year 7-12) who lives more than 2km (straight line) from school, or 2.9km or more by the most direct practical walking route; or
- TAFE student under 18 years of age at 1 January of the year of application and enrolled in a full-time TAFE course for a minimum of 20 hours a week, and is not employed, lives more than 3.2km from the college by the most direct practical walking route, and attends the college closest to their home where enrolment is available.

School Opal Cards enable a student to travel on:

- Mode(s) of transport most applicable for the student's travel requirements; train or bus or both. For bus travel, cards are restricted to individual or a combination of bus operators. For approved ferries; and
- School days only.

For travel outside school hours or days a Child/Youth Opal card is available and provides concession fares and other Opal benefits.

How do parents/students get a School Opal card?

Students with school travel passes this year will not need to apply for a School Opal card *unless* they are changing schools or their home address or moving from year 2 to 3 or year 6 to 7.

Those students who do not need to apply will have a School Opal card sent to their school for the beginning of the first term in 2016.

For new applications or for students with changing circumstances, the parents, guardians or students over 16 years are required to fill in a form online at www.transportnsw.info/school-students

After filling in the online application they print it off and take it to the school to endorse. Transport for NSW has the data online from the application and waits for the school to then endorse the application and will mail the School Opal card to the applicant's home address.