

Student Drivers Policy

Policy Development and Management

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Scope

Any student of legal driving age who intends to drive to and from Northside Christian College, either on a regular basis or occasionally, must comply with the College Student Drivers Policy and is required to complete the Student Vehicle Application Form and if necessary, ensure the Student Vehicle Passenger Permission Form is also completed.

Rationale

As students reach the age of 17 or 18 and attain their driver's licence, some may choose to drive themselves to and from the College. It is recognised that this provides extra flexibility to the travel arrangements of such students; however, there are various safety and legal liability issues that need to be taken into account.

Northside Christian College has a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of all students while they are attending the College. While some students have reached the age of 18 (and attained their driver's licence, the College's duty of care extends equally to all students.

This Policy sets out the conditions under which licensed student drivers may be permitted to drive to and from Northside Christian College (and College events and functions) and park in the immediate proximity of the College.

Driving a motor vehicle carries with it serious legal and social responsibilities, especially within our College environment where staff, students, families and community members access the College and Church parking areas.

Definitions

Licensed student drivers refers to students holding current probationary or full licence to drive on Victorian roads.

What does the research tell us about young drivers?

While most young drivers try to be careful, safety conscious and considerate when driving, it is important to recognise that despite a decline in the number of road deaths in Victoria since 1990:

- road casualty deaths remain the biggest killer of people aged 15-25
- in their first year of driving, young people are about three times more likely to be killed or injured than older, more experienced drivers
- young drivers aged between 18-25 comprise over 25% of all driver fatalities despite representing only 13% of the population.

Why is this the case?

Relative to older drivers young drivers:

- are inexperienced (which research shows is the single most important risk factor)
- have poorly developed cognitive and perceptual skills
- have a tendency to drive more often and for longer distances in all conditions
- believe that their level of driving skill is much greater than it actually is
- have a belief in their own invincibility that results in a tendency to take more risks, including a propensity not to wear seat belts and to speed
- have less well developed hazard-detection skills
- often drive for reasons of sensation seeking.

Many young drivers rationalise their risk-taking by talking down or avoiding talking about the possible outcomes, and blaming outside factors for their driving indiscretions.

The fact is that young drivers are:

'...just that – young. They are in the midst of a process of freeing themselves from their parents and making their way in the world as adults and independent beings'.

From: *Enhancing the Safety of Young Drivers:*
A resource for Local Communities, Saferoads, December 2003.

What about young drivers carrying young passengers?

Travelling with teenage passengers constitutes one of the greatest risks for young drivers and, the more passengers, the greater the risk.

- The fatal crash risk is increased five times when two or more passengers are carried.
- The increased risk with passengers present is greatest when young male passengers accompany young male drivers and is thought to be largely the result of distraction and increased risk taking.
- Friends and peers are generally a negative influence on the behaviour of young drivers, particularly young male drivers as it is thought there is an increased tendency by the young driver to take risks in response to peer pressure
- Distractions caused by social interaction among peers are likely to play a role in increasing driver inattentiveness.
- The mere physical presence of a 16-24 year old passenger is more likely to stimulate the driver to engage in risky and anti-social behaviour.
- A 16-24 year old passenger is more likely to tell the driver to take risks, to engage in anti-social driving, and to talk to the driver, than a passenger aged 55 years or older.

What do young people say about young drivers carrying young passengers?

Through research programs, young people say:

- having a young passenger in the car is more likely to stimulate the driver to engage in risky and anti- social behaviour,
- young passengers are more likely to tell the driver to take risks, to engage in anti-social driving, and to talk to the driver than older passengers,
- they do tend to take risks and give the following reasons:
 - peer group pressure
 - the need to impress friends
 - going along with the crowd
 - a need to feel accepted
 - not being a 'wuss'
 - a desire to experiment
- passengers are often unaware that they are having the effect on drivers that drivers say passengers are having on them.

Procedures

Licensed student drivers may drive to and from the College (and approved College events and functions) on the condition that:

A Student Vehicle Application form (see attached) has been completed and approved by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Director of Senior School Learning.

- The vehicle is roadworthy, registered and insured.
- The vehicle is parked in the designated areas (see attached map)
- the vehicle remains parked during the school day.

Approved student vehicle applications should be filed in a central location for easy access and verification as necessary.

Any variation to the requirement that vehicles remained parked for the duration of the school day must be requested in writing and signed by a parent or guardian and approved by the Deputy Principal.

No student may be transported as passengers in student vehicles on any College activity or function at any time.

No student may be transported as passengers in student vehicles unless permission from both the driver's and proposed passenger's parents/guardians has been received in writing and approved by the Deputy Principal. To facilitate this process, Student Vehicle Passenger Permission Forms must be completed in duplicate and signed by the relevant student's parents / guardians, with one copy to be filed in a central location and the other copy to remain with the driver.

As specified in the College's *Student Attendance and Roll Marking Policy*, students shall only be permitted to leave College premises during normal College hours where the consent of a parent, whether verbal or written, has been provided. Such requirements applies equally to student drivers.

Any non-compliance with the conditions detailed within this policy may result in the temporary or permanent limitation of his or her vehicle use during the course of the school day.

If these requirements are disregarded, parents will be notified and appropriate student sanctions will apply.

If the College becomes aware that a student driver has broken road rules or driven in an unsafe or irresponsible manner, the Police will be notified.

The College shall not be responsible for private vehicles brought onto the College or Church premises or at College events. Therefore, such vehicles should be adequately insured by the owners against theft, damage and third party claims.

Peer Passenger Restriction

In Victoria, a probationary (P1) driver is not allowed to carry more than one peer passenger when driving. The penalties for committing this offence will be three demerit points and a fine equal to three penalty units.

A peer passenger is a person who is at least 16 but less than 22 years of age, but does not include a person who is the spouse or domestic partner of the P1 probationary driver or corresponding novice driver or the sibling or step-sibling of the P1 probationary driver or corresponding novice driver.

Advertising and promoting the policy

This policy will be regularly brought to the attention of the College community through:

- Student year level assemblies
- The College Newsletter
- The contract signed by parents/guardians and students of “Correct use of a private vehicle by students”

References

Chen, L., Baker, S.P., Braver, E.R., Li, G., *Carrying Passengers as a Risk Factor for Crashes Fatal to 16 and 17 Year-old Drivers*, The Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol 283(12), March, 2000.

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, *Status Report, Special Issue: Graduated Licensing*, Vol. 34, No. 10, 4 December, 1999.

NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust, *Understanding Passenger Influences on Driver Behaviour: Implications for Road Safety and Recommendations for Countermeasure Development*, Accident Research Unit, Monash University.

Saferoads, *Enhancing the Safety of Young Drivers: A resource for Local Communities*, December, 2003. Transport Accident Commission, *Young Drivers Fact Sheet*, www.tacsafety.com.au

Williams, A.F., *Teenage Passengers in Motor Vehicle Crashes: A Summary of Current Research*, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Arlington, Virginia, December, 2001.

Victorian Department of Education and Training. (2016, March). *Student Drivers Policy Guidelines*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/studdriver.pdf>

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s three-year review cycle.

Related Policies

Attendance and Roll Marking Policy
VCE Student Policy Handbook

APPENDIX 1:

STUDENT VEHICLE APPLICATION

Student Name

Year Level

Vehicle Description (Car Make / Colour)

Registration Number

Type of Insurance and Company

I, (*student name*) agree to abide by all the conditions and guidelines of the Northside Christian College *Student Drivers Policy*.

Student Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Parent / Guardian Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Deputy Principal Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Approved

Not Approved

Note: A photocopy of the student's driver licence must be attached to this form.

Note: If the student intends to drive any car other than the one registered on this form, it must also be registered with the College.

APPENDIX 2:

STUDENT VEHICLE PASSENGER PERMISSION FORM

This form must be completed by a parent/guardian of any student intending to travel to the College as a passenger of a student who drives a car to and from the College.

We accept all conditions detailed in the College's Student Driver Policy.

Student Name

Year Level

Vehicle Description (Car Make / Colour)

Registration Number

Type of Insurance and Company

Parent Permission

I give permission for to drive to Northside Christian College and take the passenger indicated on this form. I am aware of the College requirements regarding students driving to school.

Parent / Guardian Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Parent / Guardian of Passenger

I give permission for to be driven to and from Northside Christian College by I am aware of the College requirements regarding students driving to school.

Parent / Guardian Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Student

I agree to adhere to the College requirements regarding students driving a car to school.

Student Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Details of why the student is driving other students:

.....
.....
.....

Deputy Principal Signature..... Date: ____/____/____

Approved

Not Approved

Appendix 3: Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian

A number of our Senior School students are driving or intend to drive to Northside Christian College this year and some have indicated that they intend to carry another student as a passenger.

<Student Name> has indicated that he/she intends to drive to school/will be a passenger of another student who is driving to school.

Despite the fact that most young drivers try to be careful, safety conscious and considerate when driving, research clearly shows that they are at a higher risk of having a serious crash than older, more experienced drivers.

The presence of young passengers also greatly increases the risk for teenage drivers and, the more passengers, the greater the risk.

It is important that all students and their parents / guardians are aware of these risks and the type of behaviour that the College expects from student drivers.

Copies of the College policy on student drivers and the Agreement Form are attached.

The policy outlines the College's expectations and provides information regarding the transport of passengers. Of particular note is that student drivers are not permitted to carry other students as passengers to and from the College without the written permission of their parent/guardian and the passenger's parent/guardian.

Under the Graduated Licensing System, no more than one peer aged passenger (aged 16-22 years) is permitted to travel with the driver, unless the passengers are siblings of the driver. This condition does not apply when a fully licensed driver is sitting in the front passenger seat. This is based on research that shows that young drivers carrying several passengers are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviour.

For more information, go to:

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/driver-safety/young-and-new-drivers/victorias-graduated-licensing-system

To ensure that all involved are aware of these requirements, student drivers and a parent/guardian and, where appropriate, a parent/guardian of any passengers, are required to sign an Agreement Form.

The form must be signed and returned prior to students using the designated parking area.

These requirements are intended to ensure the welfare and safety of students at our College and the local community.

Sincerely,

Michael Bond
Deputy Principal

Doug Holtam
Principal