

Child Safety PROCEDURE

Title: Child Related Costs – Travel

Procedure no: 645.3-2

Purpose

This procedure guides the use of Child Related Costs (CRC) when funding travel to support children and young people in care or who have had a care experience, which includes children and young people subject to statutory intervention with Child Safety or support service cases.

This procedure is to be used in line with the Child Related Costs Policy (CRC Policy) – 645.

Scope

CRC Travel covers eligible travel costs required to support children and young people in care or who have had a care experience.

The following categories are part of the CRC Travel procedure and show the associated General Ledger (G/L) Account Code:

- Client Support Travel (G/L Account Code: 530444)
- Education Support Travel (G/L Account Code: 530478)
- Family Contact Travel (G/L Account Code: 530443)
- Medical Travel (G/L Account Code: 530442)
- Overseas Travel (G/L Account Code: 530429)

When a carer is required to travel extensive distances as part of an approved case plan the carer is entitled to claim the kilometric allowance for all mileage in excess for the 250km threshold per child per week.

Motor Vehicle Allowance - Carers

Carers intending to transport children and young people in care are to possess a full drivers licence and either comprehensive motor vehicle insurance or third party property damage insurance in order to receive the kilometric allowance reimbursement as per the Public Service Commission Motor Vehicle Allowances Directive.

Mileage up to 250km per week is covered in the fortnightly caring allowance. Where travel exceeds 250km, only the distance exceeding the 250km limit will be reimbursed. The 250km threshold is calculated pro rata if more than one child or young person is being transported, for example:

- if the carer transports two children on a 100km journey for attendance at a school camp, this counts as 50km to each of their 250km thresholds

- if the carer transports child A on a 100km journey for attendance at a school camp, but has child B who is not attending the camp and is too young to be left at home, in the car, this counts as 100km toward child A's 250km threshold.

The exemptions from the 250km threshold rule are:

- family contact
- attendance at carer training.

If foster carers are entitled to be paid for travel costs while using their motor vehicle then the rates set out in the Motor Vehicle Allowances Directive may be used to calculate payment.

For further details please refer to the Private Motor Vehicle Claims Procedure in conjunction with this policy. The process outlined in the Private Motor Vehicle Claims Procedure also applies to carers claiming motor vehicle allowance.

Reimbursement of Fuel Costs

The process outlined in the Private Motor Vehicle Claims Procedure - Reimbursement for Fuel Costs also applies to carers seeking reimbursement of fuel costs.

TransLink go cards

All mileage and associated travel costs for family contact and carer training are excluded from mileage threshold and remain claimable through CRC.

A TransLink go card can be purchased or credited to meet the public transport costs for a child or young person. Go cards can be purchased and topped up to a maximum amount of \$50. Go cards can also be purchased for parents in exceptional circumstances.

When Child Safety purchases a go card, Child Safety will set up as the account holder, the child, young person or parent as the card holder. A separate register is maintained for clients' go cards that states the name of the child, young person or parent, client ID, date of the case plan, relevant Child Safety Officer (CSO), as well as information from the standard go card register.

The amount to be credited is determined by the frequency and cost of the anticipated travel expenses as identified in the child or young person's case plan. Translink reports will be run monthly and reconciled against the travel costs outlined in the CRC. Discrepancies between approved travel and travel taken need to be resolved with the child, young person or parent and noted on the register prior to the next credit.

For further details, refer to 'Corporate and Executive Services Policy and Procedure: TransLink's go card'.

Process

Upon a CRC request being received by the Child Safety Officer (CSO), the CSO is to refer to the CRC Policy – 645 and the corresponding procedure to determine if the request meets the guidelines for CRC.

Once the CSO has determined that the guidelines are met, the CSO can progress the request for approval. To progress approval the CSO will consult with their Business Officer and relevant financial delegate for the request.

Business Officers in each Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) are authorised to manage and pay requests up to and in accordance with their delegated authority.

The carer, child, young person or parent will be required to provide receipts for all reimbursement requests.

For requests for payment/reimbursement of \$100 or under, a CRC form is not required. Consultation between the Business Officer, CSO and Senior Team Leader is required to determine the outcome of the request. If the request is supported, the Business Officer will approve the request and process the reimbursement.

For requests for payments/reimbursements over \$100 a completed CRC form is required. Consultation between the CSO, Senior Team Leader and the financial delegate is required to determine the outcome of the request. If the request is supported, the financial delegate will approve the request and Business Services will process the reimbursement.

A link to the financial delegations has been provided under Delegations at the end of this procedure.

Child Safety Officers will:

- Consider the use of CRC as part of the case planning processes.
- Make sure carers are aware of how to request CRC for unplanned expenses as they arise.
- Make sure CRC support is consistent with the case plan and/or supportive of the care arrangement.

Business Officers will:

- Ensure the correct CRC G/L Account Code is used
- Ensure all transactions are substantiated, and necessary substantiating documentation (for example, invoices and receipts) is filed to ensure an audit trail.

Should the request not be supported, the CSO will inform the person making the request of the outcome including an explanation for the decision.

Categories for child related costs travel

Client Support Travel (G/L Account Code: 530444)

This category is used to provide financial support for general (that is, non-medical and non-educational) travel costs for carers, including mileage in excess of the 250km threshold.

Expenditure under this category can include travel needed to:

- attendance at court
- transport to and from child care or vacation care
- respite
- carer assisted driving lessons for young people and for costs associated with a change of care arrangement.

This category may also be used to assist parents with travel costs, where children are subject to statutory intervention under the *Child Protection Act 1999* and are residing at home, for attendance at court, other child-related appointments, or departmentally provided respite.

Young people who are living independently may be provided with financial assistance for travel related costs under this category for the purchase or reimbursement of fares (e.g. bus, train ticket or taxi fares).

This category is also used to assist with travel expenses for family group meetings.

Education Support Travel (G/L Account Code: 530478)

This category is used to provide financial support to carers for travel expenses, including mileage in excess of the 250km threshold.

Expenditure under this category can include costs associated with:

- a child or young person attending school in the public or private education systems
- attendance at an educational camp
- school excursions

The category may also be used to assist parents where children or young people are subject to statutory intervention under the *Child Protection Act 1999* and are residing at home, with travel costs associated with attendance at school or other educational activities (such as school camps and excursions).

This category can also provide financial support where a child or young person attends a specific school as part of their case plan. Circumstances where this would apply include when a selected school is not the closest to the carer's home or the child or young person is attending boarding school or a tertiary institution.

Expenditure under this category can include:

- flights
- coach and/or bus fares
- kilometric allowance in excess of the 250km threshold.

The cheapest and safest option must be used, for example train or bus before a taxi (Cab Charge). This arrangement must be documented as part of the approved case plan.

Any applicable subsidies offered by the Education Queensland must be claimed prior to Child Safety meeting the costs associated with school travel.

Family Contact Travel (G/L Account Code: 530443)

This category is used to provide financial support to either the child or young person's carer or family to enable family contact visits to take place in accordance with an approved case plan. The 250km mileage threshold does not apply to this account category.

This category is also used to enable a child or young person to attend a funeral of a family member or significant person.

Expenditure under this category can include:

- kilometric allowance for carers, as per 'Directive: Motor Vehicle Allowance'
- fuel costs for family members
- flights
- bus, train and taxi fares.

Medical Travel (G/L Account Code: 530442)

This category is used to provide financial support for travel expenses, including mileage in excess of the 250km threshold, for a child or young person who requires medical or therapeutic services.

In the first instance, for ongoing medical treatment, eligibility for the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) through the Department of Health should be considered for all Health Care Card holders. The PTSS provides direct assistance to patients and in some cases their carers to access specialist medical services that are not available locally. A subsidy can be provided to approved patients and carers (escorts) to assist in the cost of travel and accommodation to the nearest specialist medical service that is more than 50km from the patient's nearest hospital.

Overseas Travel (G/L Account Code: 5304292)

This category is used to provide financial support for expenses related to overseas travel such as the purchase of passports, passport photographs, visas, travel insurance and other travel-related costs. If a passport is purchased by Child Safety, it is to be returned to Child Safety on completion of travel.

The consent of the guardian is required for a child or young person in care to travel overseas. Approval for travel (where no costs are incurred by the Department) when the chief executive has guardianship must be granted by the Regional Director. For all overseas travel, regardless of the destination, the Regional Director must endorse the child's daily care arrangements.

Approval for overseas airfare and accommodation costs for a child or young person in care must be granted by the Director-General in circumstances when the flight is under five hours in duration e.g. New Zealand. If the overseas travel time exceeds five hours then approval by the Minister is required as stipulated in the whole of government Travel Policy.

Approval for these costs will be considered only:

- to maintain family contact where it is assessed as essential for the wellbeing of children and young people in care or to support a reunification plan
- to enable gifted children or young people in care to participate at the international level in their field of excellence (for example, sporting competitions, academic competitions, cultural rewards)
- in cases where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated that indicate the overseas travel is essential in maintaining a child or young person's safety, best interests and wellbeing.

Approval will not be given to a child or young person in care to participate in school excursions overseas where costs are involved.

Any costs relating to domestic travel required to enable overseas travel such as domestic airfares, are to be included as part of the total costs of the overseas trip.

Where the Director-General has approved or refused overseas travel costs, letters of advice to the carer will be prepared by the region.

A Queensland Government Overseas Travel Approval Form (FIN-26) is not required for travel by a child in care.

Interstate and Intrastate Travel

There is no specific G/L Account Code for reimbursement of expenses related to interstate or intrastate travel. Interstate or intrastate travel expenses should be charged to the G/L Account Code relating to the reason for travel such as child and young person or family contact.

Authority:

Child Protection Act 1999

Financial Accountability Act 2009

Delegations:

The use of child related costs will be in accordance with departmental financial delegations and standards.

[Financial Delegations](#)

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Office: Investment and Commissioning

Help Contact: Family Based Care and Support

Links

Related Policy

CRC – 645

Related Procedures

CRC – Health and Wellbeing Support 645.1

CRC – Education and Child Care Support 645.2

CRC – Child and Young Person Support 645.4

CRC – Carer Support 645.5

Child Safety Practice Manual

Related policies

Case planning (263)

Legislation:

Financial Accountability Act 2009

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Regulation 2023

Adoptions Act 2009

Human Rights Act 2019

Related Government Guidelines

Financial Support for Foster and Kinship Carers: Quick reference guide – Who Pays?

Forms

CRC Approval Form

Rescinded Policies/Procedures

Child Related Costs – Travel CSPR565-8

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