

**MEMORANDUM TO  
SECONDARY AND CENTRAL SCHOOL  
PRINCIPALS**

**95/025 (S.024)**

**DRIVER EDUCATION-CURRICULUM STATEMENT  
AND GUIDELINES YEARS 9 - 12**

The *Driver Education - Curriculum Statement and Guidelines* is designed to support schools in the delivery of driver education programs for students in Years 9 to 12.

The statement makes a clear distinction between driver education and driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses. Schools are encouraged to focus on the delivery of effective driver education directed towards safe road use attitudes. This is best achieved through Personal Development, Health and Physical Education programs.

For those high schools which conduct driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses, some changes in program delivery may be required. The guidelines section of the document will assist schools in making these necessary changes. This section also outlines the recent regulations under the *NSW Driver Instructors Act 1992*.

A road safety education consultant is available in each region to assist schools in the delivery of road safety education within school programs.

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# **DRIVER EDUCATION CURRICULUM STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES**

**Years 9 - 12**

**NSW Department of School Education**

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Statement and Guidelines

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## **FOREWORD**

This curriculum statement and guidelines support New South Wales Government high schools in planning effective driver education for students in Years 9-12.

Young people in the age group 15 to 25 years are significantly over represented among those killed and injured in road crashes. Research shows that the attitudes and behaviours of young drivers place them and their passengers at risk.

The school can address these behaviours and assist students to develop responsible attitudes through the delivery of well-designed driver education programs.

The primary goal of driver education is to prepare youth to make responsible decisions at all times as drivers and passengers. This will help ensure the safety of themselves and other road users.

This curriculum statement describes the context for the delivery of driver education and identifies the essential elements of school-based driver education programs. The guidelines make a clear distinction between school-based driver education programs and school-based driver instruction (behind-the-wheel skill development).

Driver education is best delivered within personal development, health and physical education programs. Aspects of driver education may also be delivered within all key learning areas as part of the school's road safety education program.

Effective school-based driver education will not only have benefits for our students as passengers and drivers but road safety benefits for the community.

Ken Boston

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SCHOOL EDUCATION**

## **RATIONALE**

The number of registered motor vehicles in New South Wales is increasing year by year. Over three million motor vehicles were registered in 1993, with many of these vehicles being driven by young people.

Gaining a licence can represent an important step towards adulthood. A driver's licence is perceived by adolescents as a symbol of independence. The motor vehicle provides the teenager with mobility, status, privacy and autonomy.

Young persons aged fifteen years have one chance in eleven of being killed or injured in a road traffic accident before they turn twenty-five. Their driving practices may threaten not only their own safety but also that of their passengers and other road users.

Risk-taking and inexperience have been identified as major contributors to the high number of accidents involving young people of this age group. Risk-taking behaviours include driving when affected by alcohol or fatigue, and driving at unsafe speeds.

In recent years schools have taken an active interest in addressing road safety issues. School communities can play a key role in assisting students in Years 9-12 to examine the responsibilities of being a driver - responsibilities for themselves, for their peers, for their families and for members of the community.

The knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes and values which are necessary to fulfil these responsibilities can be developed through sequential, comprehensive, school-based road safety education programs.

## **DRIVER EDUCATION-CURRICULUM STATEMENT**

### **1. Driver education as part of a whole-school road safety education program**

Road safety education deals with the behaviours of all road users. Students use roads as passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Road safety education is provided from early childhood through to the senior years of schooling.

Schools should address road safety issues which are age-appropriate and which relate to the needs and interest levels of students.

Most students in Years 9-12 will be interested in the issues related to driving. Many students will be learning to drive and it is appropriate for schools to focus on driver education as part of the school road safety education program.

In New South Wales government schools, road safety education is delivered as a curriculum-based program:

- within the key learning area of personal development, health and physical education;
- through integration across other key learning areas;
- as separate programs or student welfare initiatives to address specific road safety issues.

## **2. Research on driver education and driver instruction programs in schools**

School-based driver education programs which focus on the development of responsible attitudes and appropriate decision making can be effective in promoting safety and supporting the long-term objective of improved road safety attitudes in the community.

Overseas research on school-based driver instruction programs which focused on the development of driving skills reported no reduction in the accidents involving young drivers. Research findings of off-road driver instruction courses using motor vehicles, mini cars and other vehicles have not reported these techniques to be advantageous for the school-based programs.

In the light of these findings, the focus for school-based programs should be placed on assisting students to make informed decisions as road users. The school's role is to guide the development of positive road safety attitudes and values.

## **3. Providing driver education programs in New South Wales Government high schools**

Driver education is the development of knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes and values which contribute to safe and responsible road use.

The planning and delivery of school-based driver education programs should:

- reflect the key principles identified in the *Department of School Education Road Safety Education Policy Statement 1994*;
- be programmed as part of the personal development, health and physical education key learning area;
- incorporate, where appropriate, links with programs in other key learning areas and with student welfare initiatives;
- address specific student learning outcomes for the development of knowledge and understandings, skills, attitudes and values relating to safe driving issues;
- deal with alcohol and drug use, speed, driver fatigue, occupant restraints and other safety concerns;

- address the issues of risk taking and peer influence, and aspects of driver responsibility concerning other road users, vehicle ownership and the law;
- develop decision-making skills relating to safe road use behaviours;
- complement relevant Department of School Education policies such as those relating to drug and alcohol use, or the use of private motor vehicles (*Use of private motor vehicles by students; 1985*);
- form part of a coordinated, planned school road safety education program for Years 7-12;
- use current curriculum support materials which reflect the policies and practices of the Department of School Education and the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority;
- acknowledge the role of parents in the development of their teenagers' attitudes and practices associated with safe driving;
- access resources and networks within the wider community to support the delivery of driver education programs which are relevant to particular localities;
- ensure that consultation occurs with key community groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and, non-English speaking backgrounds communities.

#### **4. Providing driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses in government high schools**

Driver instruction is the provision of practical (behind-the-wheel) instruction which focuses on the development of competencies associated with the operation and control of a motor vehicle.

Driver instruction courses are not required as a standard component of driver education programs. If government high schools choose to offer driver instruction courses, these courses must be delivered within the context of the school's driver education program and must comply with the conditions outlined in the following guidelines.

#### **Compliance with the NSW Instructors Act 1992**

The *NSW Driver Instructors Act, 1992* was introduced to ensure that quality professional driver instruction is provided to all learner drivers throughout New South Wales.

The Act requires that commercial driver instructors in NSW be qualified and obtain a current Driving Instructors' Licence from the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.

Government high schools must comply with the Act by conducting school-based driver instruction courses:

- **outside of regular school hours (regular school hours as documented by school timetable).**
- **at no cost to the students.**
- **in a duplicate-controlled motor vehicle.**

### **Quality driver instruction**

Government teachers who act as driver instructors will be required to qualify as driving instructors. This requirement will be introduced progressively from 1995.

### **Cooperation with outside agencies**

Schools may seek the cooperation and support of outside agencies in the sponsorship or delivery of such courses.

In these circumstances student welfare, risk management, observance of legal requirements and the provision of quality instruction are matters of primary consideration.

Risk management, for the purpose of these guidelines, is defined as the identification of risks associated with motoring, the measurement of those risks and the development and implementation of controls.

The provision of duplicate-controlled and well-maintained vehicles for driver instruction programs in government schools will require sponsorship or support. Sponsorship agreements must meet the conditions outlined in the Department of School Education policy *Sponsorship of School and Departmental Activities (1991)*.

### **Teacher and student welfare**

Driver instruction courses require that individualised instruction be provided for students who are learner drivers. Schools should be aware that this may increase the incidence of allegations of improper conduct of instructors or students.

Principals will need to ensure that staff and students involved in such programs are fully aware of their personal rights and responsibilities.

# **GUIDELINES FOR DRIVER INSTRUCTION (BEHIND-THE-WHEEL) COURSES IN GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOLS**

## **1. Planning school-based driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses**

Schools will plan, design and schedule courses in accordance with the following requirements.

- Driver instruction courses will be scheduled outside regular school hours.
- Each driver instruction course must be linked to the driver education program within the particular school.
- Driver instruction courses will be designed to develop practical driving skills to the level required to pass a New South Wales provisional licence test.
- Driver instruction courses will emphasise the importance of safety in driving, so that the behaviour of the driver combines with the level of skills attained to promote accident-free driving.
- Driver instruction courses will not aim to develop 'advanced' driving skills as such programs can result in narrowing the safety margin for inexperienced drivers.

## **2. Community acceptance and support for driver instruction courses**

The support of school communities is critical to the success of road safety education programs and to driver instruction courses in particular.

In order to inform the school community, and enlist its support, the principal will need to ensure that the following conditions are met.

- The principal will need to appraise the educational quality of the proposed driver instruction course, as well as the procedures to be followed, to ensure sound risk management.
- The documentation for the proposed driver instruction course must specify the teaching and learning activities and outcomes.
- Course documentation must stipulate that students will observe adequate safety procedures in the use of public roads, school premises and other specified off-road facilities.
- Documentation must also specify the evaluation process and the criteria to be used in assessing the achievement of the student outcomes.

### **3. Student participation in school-based driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses**

Students can participate in driver instruction courses under the following conditions.

- All school-managed driver instruction courses will be free of any charge to participating students.
- Student participation in driver instruction courses is to be voluntary.
- Students' participation must be supported by written parental consent which is specific to the particular course and the arrangements for driving practice.
- Each participating student must hold a current learner's licence.
- Each student is encouraged to wear flat closed shoes and comfortable clothing for practical driving lessons.
- Each student will observe the rules applying to driving with a learner's licence, as well as the other road rules.
- The instruction vehicle will carry only the driving instructor and the learner driver when the instruction is in progress.

### **4. Teacher participation in driver instruction courses**

Teachers may act as driving instructors in driver instruction courses under the following conditions.

- The teacher's involvement has the approval of the school principal.
- Teachers who act as instructors must be experienced drivers over 21 years of age who have held an unrestricted (not learner, provisional or probationary) licence for three out of the previous four years.
- Teachers who act as instructors in courses will be required to qualify as instructors and to obtain a current Driving Instructors' Licence from the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority. This requirement will be introduced progressively from 1995.
- Their participation is on a voluntary basis and attracts no payment.
- The instruction is on a one-to-one basis during driving practice sessions.
- Teachers who qualify as instructors should not directly market their services to students of government schools.
- Teachers who act as instructors in school-based courses outside of school hours will be covered by the workers compensation act.

## **5. Ownership, maintenance and operation of vehicles**

Schools which obtain motor vehicles for driver instruction courses must do so under the following conditions.

- Ownership for each vehicle must comply with the conditions outlined in the Department of School Education policy *Acquisition of Motor Vehicles by Schools* (1983) or in any future policy.
- Each vehicle to be used must be equipped with duplicate driving controls of a type approved by the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority.
- Each vehicle to be used must be registered and have comprehensive motor vehicle insurance.
- Each vehicle to be used must be serviced and maintained to ensure safe and efficient operation at all times.
- All costs relating to any vehicle used will be met by the agent or agencies sponsoring the project.
- Arrangements will be made for the garaging of each vehicle away from departmental premises.

## **6. Student participation in commercial driving school courses**

When high schools enter into arrangements which involve the participation of their students in driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses conducted by commercial driving instructors or commercial driving schools, the principal should ensure that liability is not incurred through such interaction.

- The emphasis, direction and level of the course of instruction provided by the commercial driving instructor or school should be in accordance with the guidelines which apply to school-based driver instruction courses. (Refer to sections 1,2,3, and 5)
- The conduct of the commercial driving instructor or school should comply with the requirements of the *Driving Instructors Act, 1992*. The driving instruction must be conducted with a qualified instructor in a duplicated-controlled vehicle.
- The collection of any fees or charges should be carried out by the commercial driving school and should not involve the high school as an agent.

## **7. Conditions for sponsorship and support of school-based driver instruction (behind-the-wheel) courses**

Schools may cooperate with outside agencies which:

- operate in compliance with the *New South Wales Driving Instructors Act, 1992*;
- provide the driver instruction course within the context of the school's driver education program;

- are prepared to sponsor a driver instruction course in accordance with the policy, *Sponsorship of School and Departmental Activities (1991)*.

All schools obtaining sponsorship of driver instruction courses will fulfil the monitoring and reporting responsibilities specified in the implementation guidelines for the policy statement, *Sponsorship of School and Departmental Activities (1991)*.

**Sponsorship of School and Departmental Activities (1991)**  
**(an excerpt from Implementation Guidelines)**

“The authority to negotiate and approve sponsorship rests with:

- School principals when the sponsorship involves a single school and a locally based organisation;
- Directors of schools when the sponsorship involves a group of schools and a locally based organisation;
- Assistant Directors-General (Regions) (or a designated officer) when the sponsorship involves a regionally based activity or several clusters of schools;
- Director (or a designated officer) of a central function when the sponsorship involves an activity falling within the responsibility of that director;
- The Budget Committee through the Deputy Director-General (Resources) when the sponsorship involves Department-wide activity and the value of the sponsorship is \$250,000 or greater.”

The approval for sponsorship of a school driver instruction course may be withdrawn at any time if the principal, director of schools or assistant director-general (region) perceives that the approved conditions are not being adhered to, or if, in the opinion of that officer, the course is not proving to be successful.

The principal is responsible for the introduction and operation of driver instruction courses at the school level.