



Briefing Note: School Transport Route Changes – Term 1 2021

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins Minister of Education		
Date:	3 February 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1249350
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on the school bus route review process.

Note that this Briefing will be proactively released.

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree

Summary

This briefing note provides you with information on the following:

- The Ministry's process for reviewing school bus routes.
- Route reviews that were carried out in 2019 for the purposes of tender pricing.
- A list of route changes that come into effect at the start of Term 1, 2021.

☒ Agree ☐ Disagree



Kim Shannon
Head of Education Infrastructure

3 / 2 / 21



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

8 / 2 / 2021

Background

Route review process

1. The Ministry continuously reviews its school bus routes to ensure they remain within policy. Over time, the locations and needs of students change, and the Ministry works with local schools and transport service providers to ensure routes continue to meet the needs of eligible students and are financially viable.
2. Communities are given at least a term's notice before any possible changes to bus routes are implemented, to give affected families time to make any necessary adjustments. Schools are responsible for communicating any upcoming changes to their communities.
3. Bus routes are designed to address Health and Safety issues and to ensure services are operating with eligible students in mind. Where safety issues are identified with a route, we work with local councils, bus operators and NZTA to address these. We use a variety of sources, including roll returns data to estimate the location of eligible students to pick up as many students as possible, as close to their homes as practicable.

School bus tender

4. As you are aware, current daily bus and technology bus contracts expire on 31 December 2021 for approximately 1,500 Daily Bus routes and 700 Technology routes.
5. To establish new contracts with transport providers for these routes from the start of 2022, the Ministry designed a procurement approach to support the Government's priority of supporting "thriving and sustainable regions".
6. In 2019, a large number of routes was reviewed in preparation for the tender to ensure that tender respondents were pricing their bids on the most up-to-date versions of routes and maps.
7. With new contracts starting in Term 1 2022, we will limit ourselves to demand-driven route reviews, initiated by the school or transport provider, for the remainder of 2021 to minimise change.

Route changes – start of the 2021 school year

8. At the start of the school year, we plan and are prepared for an increased number of students who may have moved schools or changed home address and may be unfamiliar with route information. To mitigate this uncertainty, our transport providers have been instructed to transport everyone to school in the first two weeks of term and leave no child behind.
9. From the start of Term 1, 2021, there are 23 route changes (1.6% of the 1,429 total Daily routes). The changes are listed in Annex 1. We worked with schools and transport providers on these route changes throughout 2020.
10. Three routes are being terminated due to the number of eligible students being transported falling below our route viability threshold of eight students. Our standard process with all terminations is to engage with affected schools to discuss alternative arrangements for eligible students, and for the school to communicate the decision to terminate the route to caregivers of ineligible students.

Next Steps

11. To proactively manage these changes, our Regional Transport Advisors will be calling each affected school on their first day of school to check in on any issues that require resolution or escalation to the transport provider.

Annexes

Annex One: Route Changes effective Term 1, 2021

Proactively Released

Annex One: Route Changes Effective Term 1, 2021

For most schools, it's business as usual. The following route changes come into effect from Term 1, 2021.

	Route No.	Region	Type
1	2133	Waikato (Benneydale, near Manawatu border)	Termination
2	2092	Bay of Plenty (Horohoro, south of Rotorua)	Termination
3	7180	Tasman (Takaka)	Termination
4	2316	Waikato (Otorohanga)	Realignment
5	7064	West Coast (Hokitika)	Realignment
6	7066/7066A	West Coast (Hokitika)	Realignment
7	1246	Northern (Whangarei West)	Extension
8	7022	Tasman (Takaka)	Extension
9	7062	West Coast (Hokitika)	Extension
10	7020	Tasman (Motueka)	Extension
11	7562	Canterbury (Sefton)	DR route handed back to Ministry (new daily route from Term 1, 2021)
12	7593	Canterbury (Clarkville School south of Kaiapoi)	DR curtailments/extension
13	2442	Waikato (Otorohanga)	Curtailments/extension
14	3110	Western (Mokoia, South Taranaki)	Curtailments/extension
15	5239	Eastern (Napier)	Curtailment
16	2207	Waikato (Otorohanga)	Curtailment
17	2439	Waikato (Otorohanga)	Curtailment
18	2440	Waikato (Otorohanga)	Curtailment
19	7065	West Coast (Hokitika)	Curtailment
20	7002/7066B	West Coast (Hokitika)	Curtailment
21	7071	West Coast (Hokitika)	Curtailment
22	7067	West Coast (Hokitika)	Curtailment
23	7068	West Coast (Hokitika)	Curtailment

GLOSSARY

DR = Direct Resourced/funded. These schools/networks are responsible for managing any route changes directly with their contracted transport provider.

Route change types:

- Curtailment = existing route shortened due to changing eligible student demand
- Extension = existing route lengthened due to changing eligible student demand
- Realignment = alteration to route directions to meet student demand or to optimise by rationalising route directions
- Termination = Cancelling service due to route falling outside policy settings, e.g. due to insufficient eligible students to meet financial viability threshold