

From: Reade Nikora <9(2)(a)>
Sent: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 3:03 PM
To: Chris Betty <C.Betty@tuakaucollege.com>
Cc: Onewhero Area School <r.bills@onewhero.school.nz>; Principal - Mangatawhiri School <principal@mangatawhiri.school.nz>; Principal - Pokeno School <principal@pokeno.school.nz>; Principal - Poukawa School <principal@pukekawa.school.nz>; Principal - Te Kohanga School <principal@tekohanga.school.nz>
Subject: Franklin Transport Network Group - Transport Funding Review

Kia ora Chris

This email follows-up on our recent telephone conversation regarding the Franklin Transport Network Group's request for a review of your Directly Resourced school transport funding.

As discussed, the Ministry of Education has agreed to carry out a review of your DR funding. This email is to confirm a meeting with you and all the principals involved in the Franklin Transport Network Group to talk about the review process and what information we'll need from you.

Meeting details

Date: 8 March 2023

Time: 11:00am

Location: online at your Network Group's monthly hui (link to be provided to me).

I appreciate you making time for me at your TNG hui next week, so I will only take up around 30 minutes of your hui.

My korero will cover:

- The timeframe for your school's DR funding review
- What information we'll need from your school to assist the funding review
- Information on how the Ministry designs school bus routes
- Eligibility criteria for school transport assistance

There will also be the opportunity to discuss any information that you think may be helpful to the funding review process.

Meeting preparation

I have attached for you our factsheet that outlines how we design school bus routes. You may find it helpful to read this document before our meeting.

In the meantime, please get in touch if you have any queries.

Ngā mihi

Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

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[education.govt.nz](https://www.education.govt.nz)

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We shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes

From: ST Auckland
Sent: Thursday, 25 May 2023 11:57 am
To: 9(2)(a)
Cc: ST Auckland
Subject: Notification of School Transport Funding Review in Tuakau
Attachments: Letter to Bruce Cameron - Chairperson Rural-Port Waikato Community Board - school bus route funding review - Tuakau - NB.pdf

Tēnā koe Bruce

Please see attached correspondence from James Meffan, Group Manager of School Transport at Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education, regarding an upcoming School Transport funding review in the Tuakau area.

Ngā mihi
Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
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We shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent outcomes





**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

25/05/2023

Bruce Cameron
Chairperson
Rural-Port Waikato Community Board

via: 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Bruce

School bus routes funding in Tuakau to be reviewed

The Ministry of Education will shortly be commencing a funding review of the directly resourced school bus services in Franklin / Tuakau area. This funding review has been requested by the Franklin Transport Network Group, which is a group of six schools spanning the Port Waikato electorate.

We provide bulk funding direct to some schools to organise and manage transport assistance for their eligible students through the Directly Resourced school transport assistance model.

Over the next few months our school transport team will be working with the Franklin Transport Network Group and their transport service provider to ensure that they are receiving the correct level of funding for the number of eligible students that they have.

Ensuring school bus routes operate within our school transport assistance policy is a statutory obligation under our appropriation; we are limited to providing services for eligible students.

Please note, current school transport funding will continue unchanged until the funding review project is completed. Once the funding review is complete, I will notify you of the final outcome.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Meffan'.

James Meffan
Group Manager, School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital



From: Chris Betty 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 22 June 2023 11:46 am
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Franklin South Bus Review

Hi Reade

Monday 26th June at 2pm-does this suit you.

I have just put out to all the network. Some maybe be there in person but did offer by zoom.
If you can come to College that would be good on Monday. Or you can zoom in either or.

Regards

Chris Betty
Principal
Tuakau College

P: 9(2)(a)
M: 9(2)(a)
W: www.tuakaucollege.com



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From: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, June 9, 2023 5:02 PM
To: Chris Betty <9(2)(a)>
Subject: RE: Franklin South Bus Review

Kia ora Chris

Sorry I wasn't able to get back to you earlier today. I am having my work checked at the moment. Timeline for now will be to get back to you after the 21st to organise a hui to discuss the route design and funding implications. Feedback will then be open for you and the other schools to provide before any confirmation in funding changes are confirmed.

Hope you can provide this update in your minutes.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Cheers,
Reade.

Reade Nikora | Acting Team Leader | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

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From: Chris Betty <9(2)(a)>
Sent: Friday, 9 June 2023 7:56 am
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)>
Subject: Franklin South Bus Review

Mōrena Reade

Any update on where you are at with the bus review.
We have a meeting at 11:30am today and would like to feedback to the network!

Any information is appreciated.

Kia pai te rā
Chris Betty
Principal
Tuakau College

P: 9(2)(a)
M: 9(2)(a)
W: www.tuakaucollege.com



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From: Reade Nikora
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2023 8:36 am
To: Libby Bickley-Barry
Subject: RE: Initial outcome - DR funding review

Kia ora Libby

As the bus route operations are managed by the Franklin Transport Network Group, the changes described only relate to the funding the Group receives from the Ministry to deliver the bus routes. Therefore, any changes to your AM & PM routes will be at the discretion of the Group.

I'd be more than happy to sit down with you, or organise a phone call, to walk you through this. It is quite important, given your school is involved in the funding agreement.

Please let me know if there is a date/time that works for you for me to come out to school or give you a call.

Cheers,
Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

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From: Libby Bickley-Barry <principal@tekohanga.school.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 27 June 2023 2:55 pm
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Subject: Re: Initial outcome - DR funding review

Kia ora,

I am new to Te Kohanga School this year. This email is very confusing.

What impacts will these changes have to Te Kohanga School morning and afternoon bus routes?

Aku mihi nui ki a koe,

Libby Bickley-Barry
Principal
9(2)(a)



On Mon, 26 Jun 2023 at 18:26, Reade Nikora 9(2)(a) > wrote:

Kia ora koutou

Thank you to those who were able to join me at the hui this afternoon regarding the Directly Resourced funding review. As discussed, I have attached copies of all of the draft routes, as well as proposed funding and route breakdowns.

To re-cap the hui:

- Given the number of eligible students across all six schools, there is a proposed funding reduction of ~20%
- Attached to that funding decrease is the proposal to terminate five of the routes current funded, leaving eight remaining routes
- These routes are draft at present, and no decisions will be made prior to feedback from all schools
- While these routes are designed using the Ministry's route design criteria (attached again for reference), there is no obligation on the group to deliver these routes. The purpose of these routes to determine the level of funding.

I now invite the group to provide feedback on the draft routes for consideration.

While there was no conclusion on a timeframe for providing feedback, I propose feedback to be no later than **4pm Friday 4 August 2023** to allow the group time to undertake the tendering process before the end of the school year. However, if more time is required, please let me know in advance.

If you have any questions or would like anything clarified, please get in touch.

Ngā mihi

Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

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Hamilton Office

From: Reade Nikora
Sent: Tuesday, 1 August 2023 2:31 pm
To: Chris Betty
Subject: RE: Franklin South Bus Network Submission

Thanks Chris – received. I shall get back to you once I have time to review the submission, hopefully late this week.

Cheers,
Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital
PH +64 800 287 272 | DDI 9(2)(a) | Mobile 9(2)(a)

From: Chris Betty 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, 1 August 2023 2:26 pm
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Subject: Franklin South Bus Network Submission

Kia ora Reade

Please find attached the Bus submission after you presented the Bus Funding Review for our Bus Network..
Any queries do not hesitate to email me.

Ngaa mihi
Chris Betty
Principal
Tuakau College

P: 9(2)(a)
M: 9(2)(a)
W: www.tuakaucollege.com



TUAKAU COLLEGE

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Te Arotake Putea Pahi

Bus Funding Review

Submission 2023

Franklin South Bus Network

On Wednesday 19th July the Franklin South Bus network schools (Tuakau College-Fundholding School, Pokeno School, Mangatawhiri School, Pukekawa School, Onewhero Area School, Te Kohanga Primary) met to discuss the first cut of the Bus Network Funding Review completed by Reade Nikora Senior Regional Transport Advisor from the Ministry of Education. This submission is to give feedback to the Ministry of Education about the proposed changes in funding and routes.

Each school gave feedback after careful consideration of the runs presented.

1549:

The concern is that the bus is not funded to go further than Opuatia Hall. There are a number of families past this point that would need a service.

It is 35.9km from Pukekawa school to Waikaretu School (this is the nearest school to Pukekawa in this area).

The half way point is 18km as indicated by the red flag on the map (labelled 1549 Pukekawa). This is the end of the entitlement zone for the Franklin South Bus Network in this area.

From the mid-point the student must live 2.4 kilometers so the nearest stop at the point indicated by the green flag. This is where the bus should be funded to-not just to the Opuatia Hall and Otuiti Road.

The students in this area will Transfer their eligibility to our Network when they pick up the bus at this point indicated. This does not cross enrolment zones and the safest end point and turn around would be in Glen Murray.

There are a number of families in this area that require a service to Pukekawa School.

1655:

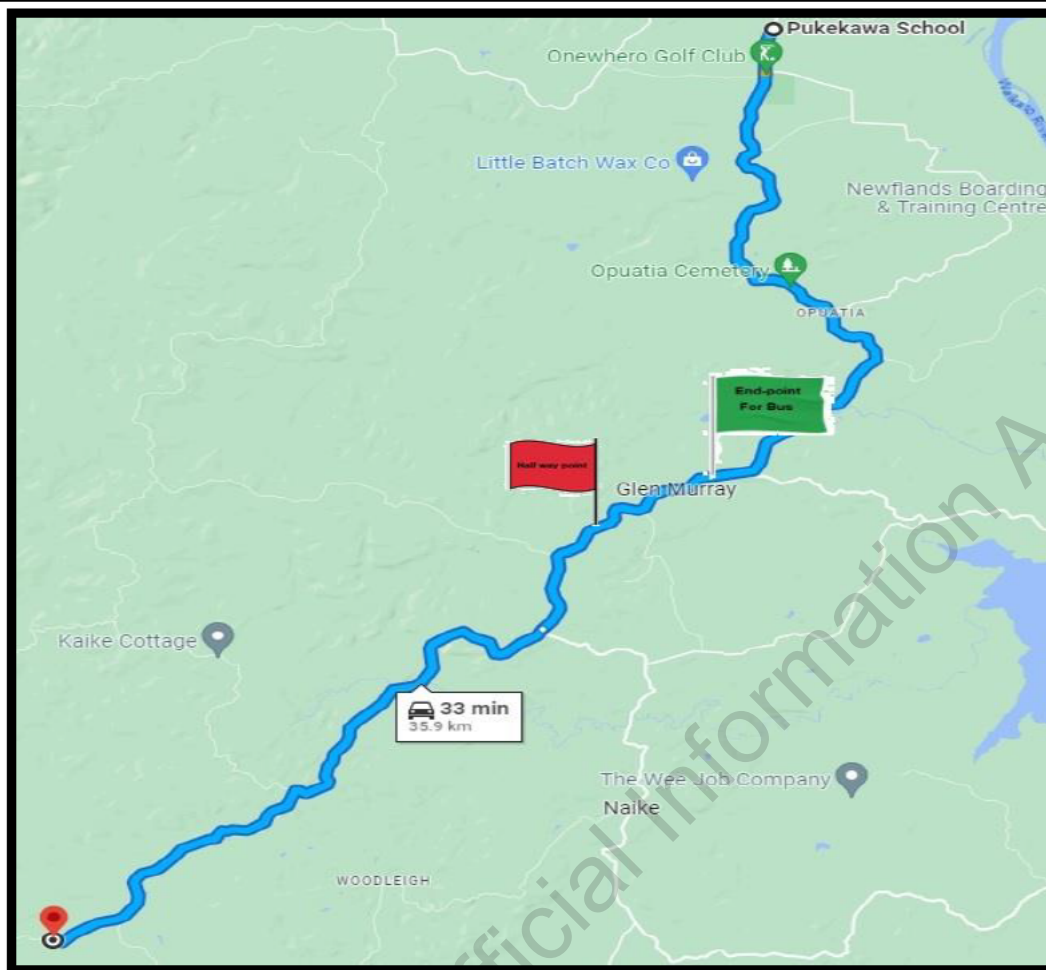
The same as above would apply for Onewhero Area School Students.

It is 46.3 km from Onewhero Area School and Te Kauwhata College in the Glen Murray Area.

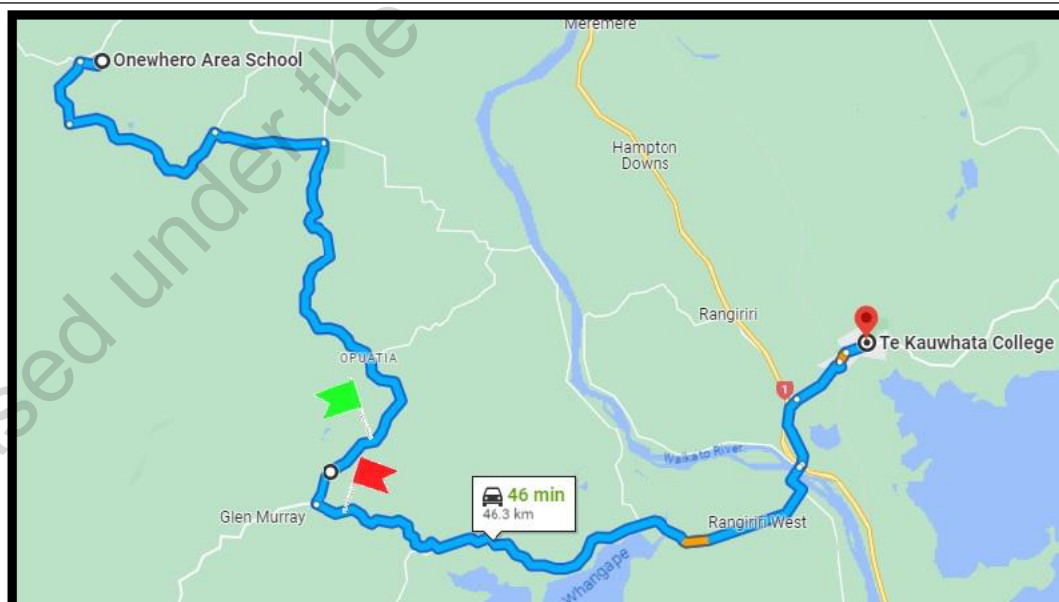
The half way point is 23.2 kilometers just before the Glen Murray turn-off, as indicated by the red flag on the map. Go back 2.4km takes this to the green flag.

Once again, the bus should be funded to go further than Opuatia Hall, Otuiti Rd

Please note that the road, the ability for a bus to turn around at the green flag is very limited on this road. So where the mid-point and the turn around point are will be distinctly different.



1549 Pukekawa



1655 OAS Pukekawa

1656:

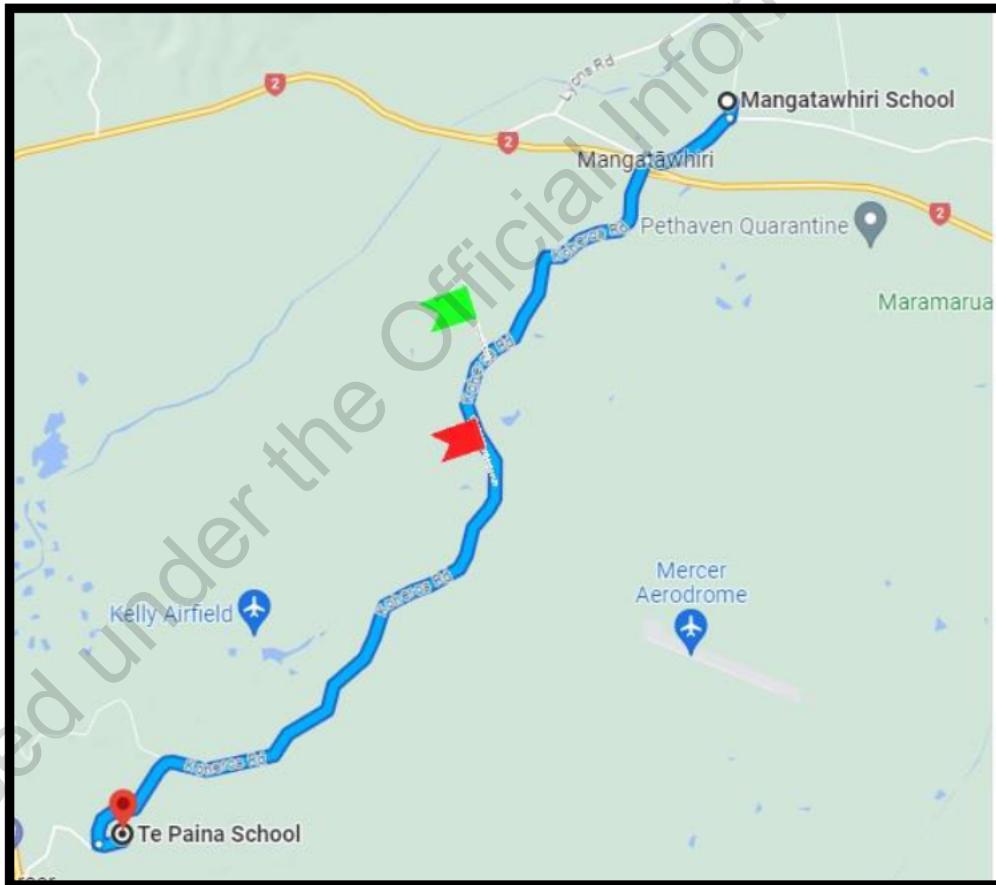
This route Onewhero Area School to Wairamarama and return requires a small bus to run this route. A 20 seater bus because of health and safety on this road. The road is narrow, metal, and has suffered damage due to the cyclone and bad weather we have had over the past year. Health and safety of the students is paramount and needs to be reflected in the funding of this route. It may mean a couple of run-backs to ensure the bus can get all the students from this area. It may mean a connection with another bigger bus to get the students to kura on time and safely.

1608:

There is no service down Koheroa Rd for students in the morning and afternoon for Mangatawhiri School.

It is 10 kilometers between Mangatawhiri Primary and Te Paina Primary.

The halfway point is 5 kilometers between schools - see red flag. Go back the required distance is the green flag and this is where the bus should be funded too. There are also secondary students in this area to be picked up and dropped off. This means this is where the funding should go to.



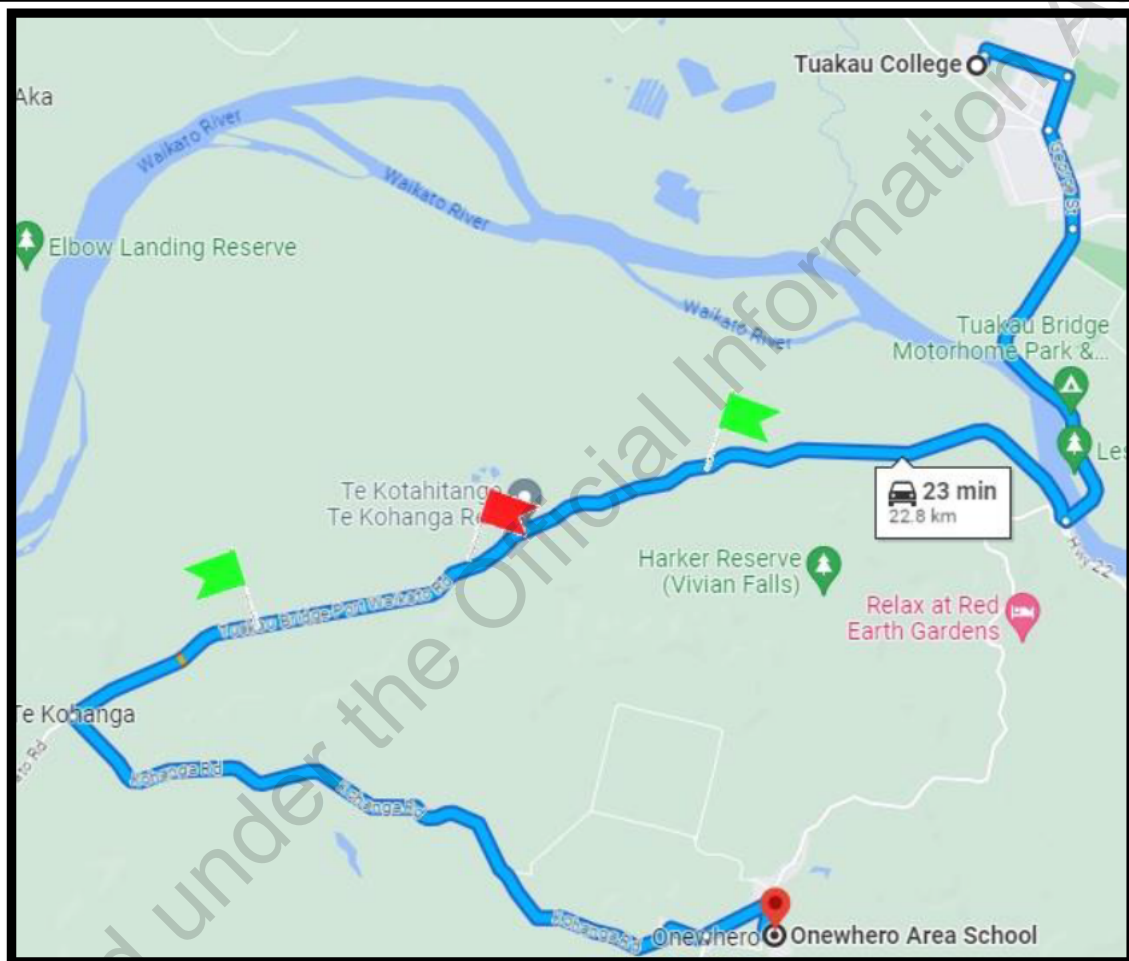
1608 Mangatawhiri

1540 and 1701 Port Road

There are students both Primary and secondary (Tuakau College, Onewhero Area school and Te Kohanga Primary) where there is no service. They are in "no mans land". If you look at the distances between schools.

Onewhero Area School to Tuakau College via Te Kohanga is 22.8 kilometres.

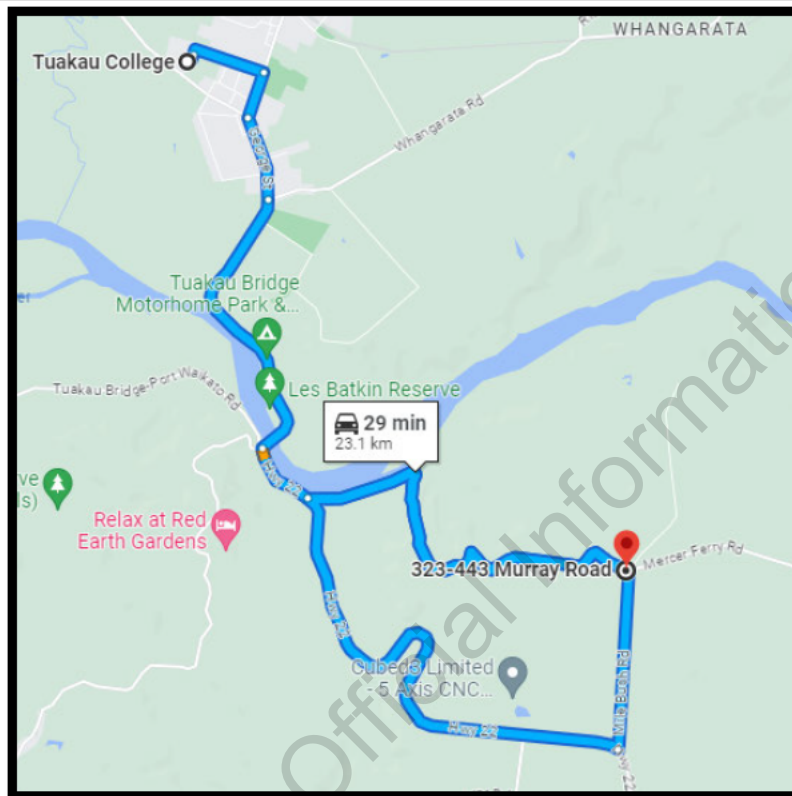
The half way point is 11.4 km which is indicated by the red flag. On both sides are the green flags which indicate the possible turn arounds-2.4 kilometres from the midpoints. This means all the students inbetween and up Frost Rd are not serviced. Please review and adjust the mid-point so that these students can get closer to the service indicated. This will also allow Te Kohanga students to be transported to their school.



1540 and 1701 Port Road

1701

The funded route sees the Bus going up and down Murray Rd. This is a totally inappropriate road to use with the size of the bus as the road is metal, narrow and dangerous. In the winter Murray Rd, down by the Waikato River, floods making this stretch of the road inaccessible to Highway 22. The best route is the using Highway 22. This is the safest and most practical route to use-it is what the present buses use. It means for the MOE a recalculation of the funded route.



1701 Tuakau College

There are NO runs from Pokeno to Tuakau College because there is a public service that families can access to get their child to and from Tuakau College.

We want to argue the point that the local bus service is inappropriate and unable to meet the requirements of getting all the students to and from Tuakau College in a timely fashion as required.

Tuakau College has contacted the Waikato Regional Council (49% Regional council and 51% Waka Kotahi) who run the BUSIT service which is the service from Pokeno to Pukekohe. They are very adamant at this point in time that they are unable to meet the requirements of the bus service. C Betty contacted Katherine Simpson and Mark Tamura (who has spoken with Reade) about the regional councils position.

In summary the regional council have told us:

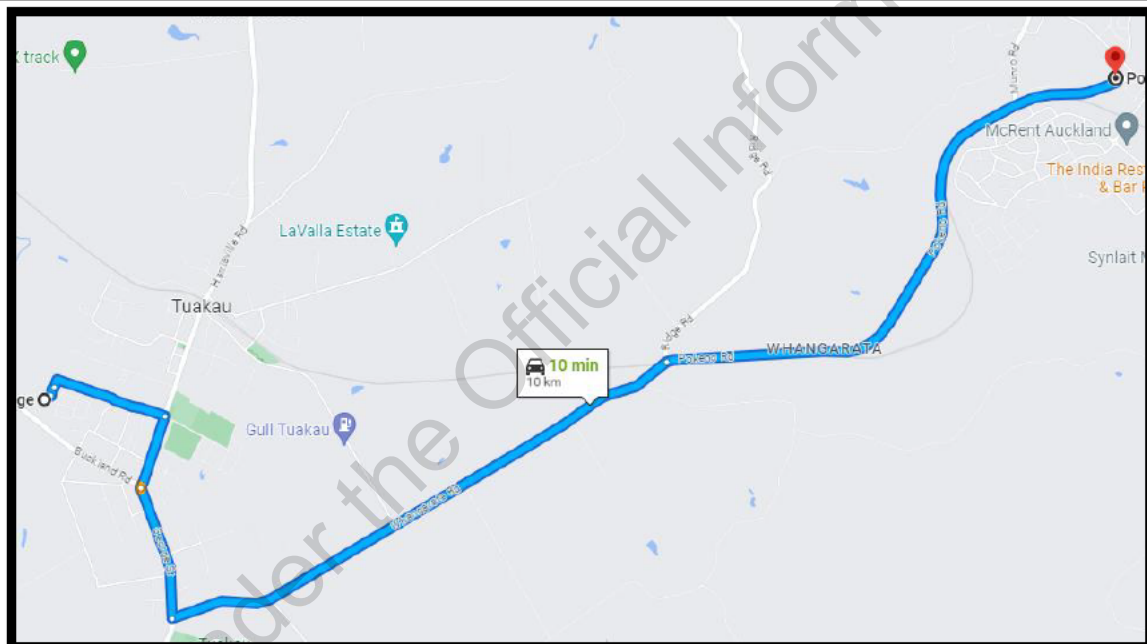
- The service is still temporary – there is NO certainty that the service will continue.
- The funding for the service is not guaranteed by Waka Kotahi or the regional council
- The existing buses do not have capacity to accommodate the 315 students that could possibly use the bus from this area to Tuakau College.

- There are NO plans (and funding) to increase the number of buses and provide additional bus services during these peak times.
- Waikato Regional Council have NO plans to undertake significant changes to the existing services and funding to meet the needs of the College.

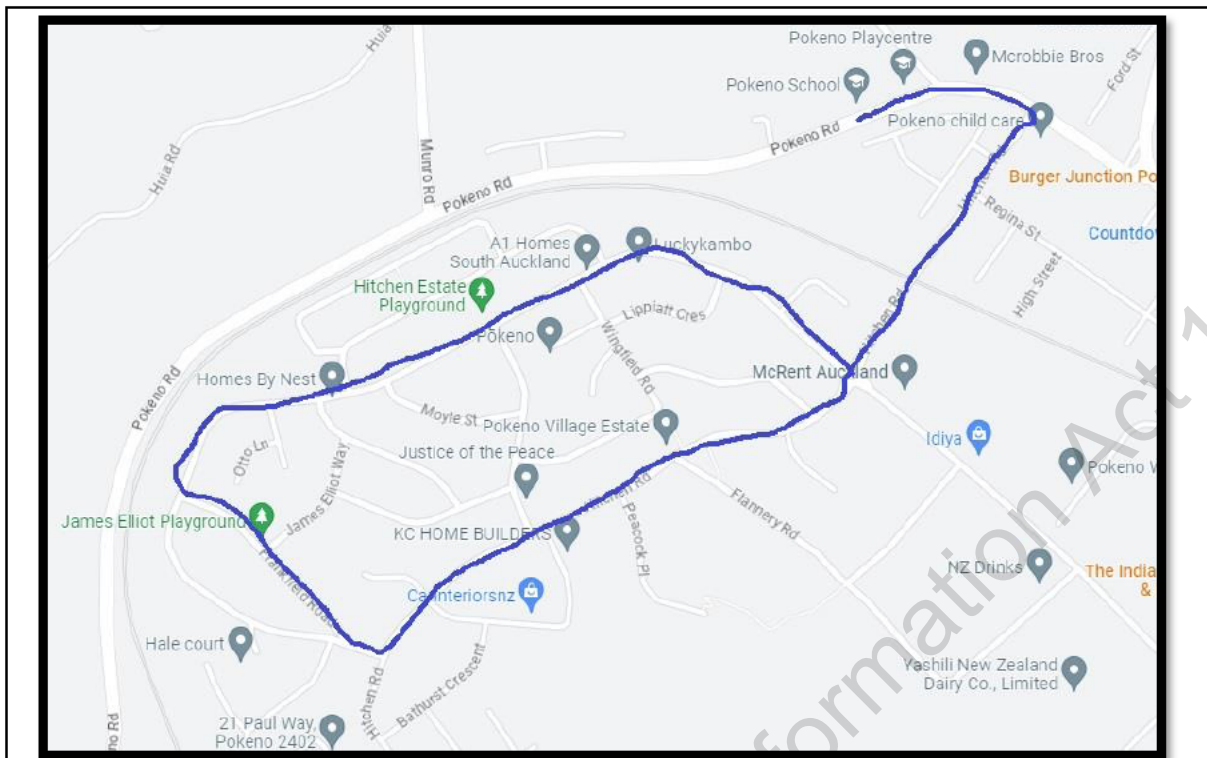
Because this service is not appropriate we would need to run buses as we presently run them and hence an increase in funding for these services.

Suggested routes to cope with no public service:

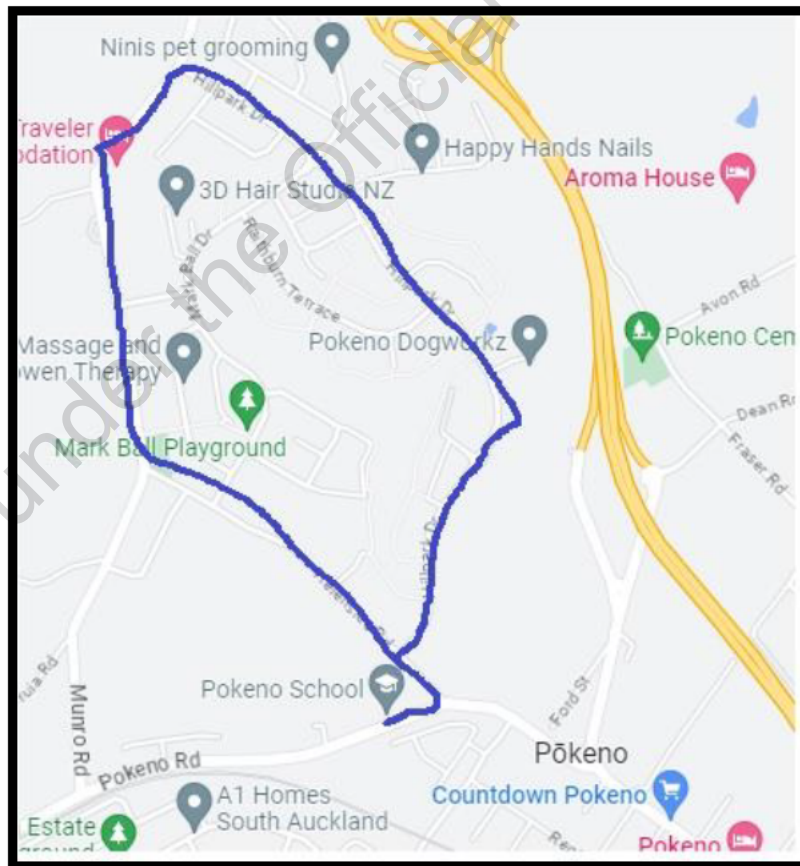
1. 1546 runs as per the route
2. Extend 1608 from Pokeno School to Tuakau College with the students from Mangatawhiri and the east side of Pokeno being able to get to Tuakau College.
3. Run a bus service into Pokeno, Hitchen Rd, Harriet Johnson loop and then back to Tuakau College (see Proposed loop-we already do this now!).
4. Run a bus service into Pokeno, Munro, Helenslee, Hill Park and the back to Tuakau College. (see proposed loop-we already do this now!).



Extension of 1608



Proposed Loop for Hitchen Rd
After loop completed back to Tuakau College



Proposed loop for Hillpark
After loop completed back to Tuakau College

Conclusion

Please consider the facts and data in this submission.

The Franklin South Bus Network has been working hard to provide a service for the schools in the network and has been very successful over the past 20 years.

We look forward to a response.

C Betty

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Betty', written over the printed name.

Franklin South Bus Network Chair

From: Reade Nikora
Sent: Thursday, 3 August 2023 1:34 pm
To: Sarah Loynes
Cc: Katherine Simpson; Vishal Ramduny
Subject: RE: MoE School Transport contacts

Kia ora Sarah

I have touched base with our SLT and please be advised that we will most likely have the briefing note to you by early next week now.

Our apologies for the delay.

Ngā mihi

Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

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From: Reade Nikora
Sent: Thursday, 3 August 2023 9:27 am
To: Sarah Loynes 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: MoE School Transport contacts

Mōrena Sarah

I haven't received it back from my SLT yet.....bit of a delay on our end. Will follow up today.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

PH +64 800 287 272 | DD 9(2)(a) | Mobile 9(2)(a)

From: Sarah Loynes 9(2)(a) >
Sent: Thursday, 3 August 2023 9:20 am
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a) >
Subject: RE: MoE School Transport contacts

You don't often get email from 9(2)(a) . [Learn why this is important](#)

Hey Reade – apologies if you have already sent this to Vince – but did that briefing note come over?

**Sarah
Loynes**

| MANAGER - TRANSPORT POLICY AND
PROGRAMMES

| Transport Policy and Programmes, Regional Transport
Connections

WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL | Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

P: 9(2)(a)

M: 9(2)(a)

F: facebook.com/waikatoregion

Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre, Hamilton, 3240

From: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)

Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 10:20 AM

To: Sarah Loynes 9(2)(a)

Vincent Kuo 9(2)(a) >

Cc: Mark Tamura 9(2)(a) >

Subject: MoE School Transport contacts

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Waikato Regional Council. Do not follow guidance, click links, or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Kia ora korua

Thank you for the meeting yesterday avo. As we talked about, contact details below for our TL for whom would welcome a conversation on how the Ministry is funded to provide school transport assistance.

James Meffan – Group Manager | School Transport

9(2)(a)

Rhona Hewitt – Manager, Planning & Liaison | School Transport

9(2)(a)

I will be back in touch with a draft briefing note in the next few days.

Ngā mihi

Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport

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From: ST Auckland
Sent: Tuesday, 22 August 2023 3:12 pm
To: Katherine Simpson
Cc: ST Auckland
Subject: Notification of School Transport Funding Review Outcome - Tuakau
Attachments: Outcome Letter to Waikato Regional Council.pdf

Tēnā koe Katherine

Please see attached correspondence relating to the outcome of the recent School Transport funding review in the Tuakau area. This follows an email we sent you earlier this year in relation to the Ministry's commencement of the review.

Ngā mihi
Reade.

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Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital
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**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

22/08/2023

Katherine Simpson
Public Transport Planner
Waikato Regional Council

via 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Katherine

Outcome of school bus funding review in Tuakau

In May of this year, the Ministry of Education notified you of our intent to review the bulk funding the Franklin Transport Network Group (FTNG) receives under our school transport assistance funding scheme called Directly Resourced.

The funding review requested by FTNG, a group of six schools spanning the Mangatawhiri, Tuakau and Port Waikato areas, is now complete.

The funding review was informed by information provided by FTNG, our discussions with FTNG, and the Ministry's eligibility criteria and route design guidelines. FTNG has been notified of the funding review outcome and the resulting change in bulk funding, which comes into effective from 1 April 2024.

FTNG can choose how it uses its bulk funding to provide school transport assistance to eligible students. Assistance can be through a place on a vehicle provided either by a transport service provider or by the schools (e.g., a van/bus owned by school), or by financial assistance provided direct to caregivers.

To be eligible for school transport assistance, students must meet all three of the following eligibility criteria:

1. They are attending their closest (state or state-integrated) school that they can enrol at.
2. They live more than a certain distance from school:
 - 3.2km for Years 1 - 8
 - 4.8km for Years 9 - 13
3. There is no suitable public transport available.
Suitable public transport must travel within:
 - 2.4 km of the roadside gate of the student's home.
 - 2.4 km of the closest appropriate school.



We understand FTNG currently carries ineligible students on its bus routes and that some or all of these students may be paying a fare.

For details of the school transport assistance FTNG provides please contact the Chairperson, Chris Betty, Principal of Tuakau College.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to know more about the Directly Resourced funding scheme.

Nāku noa, nā



Reade Nikora

Senior Regional Transport Advisor

Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

ST.Auckland@education.govt.nz

From: Chris Betty 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 30 August 2023 4:31 pm
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Subject: Outcome of DR funding review

Kia ora Nikora

Thank you for the work with the funding review and considering the submission.

After our Board meeting last night - the Board is not very happy about the outcome of the funding review where you have cut the funding for the Pookeno bus services.

The Board would like to meet with you, and or Regina Osborne and the Waikato Regional Council to discuss this matter further. We still believe the bus service is going to be totally inadequate for the number of students. Look forward to your response.

Please let me know possible dates and times and my PA will coordinate getting everyone together.

Ngaa mihi
Chris Betty
Principal
Tuakau College

P: 9(2)(a)
M: 9(2)(a)
W: www.tuakaucollege.com



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From: Vishal Ramduny 9(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, 8 September 2023 7:11 am
To: Reade Nikora
Cc: Katherine Simpson; Peter Henderson; Attinder Singh
Subject: RE: Funding School Buses from Pookeno to stop

Noted with thanks, Reade. We will have a discussion with Chris Betty to understand how he wishes to supplement the removal of the MoE service.

Ngaa mihi,

Vishal.

From: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2023 7:14 PM
To: Vishal Ramduny 9(2)(a)
Cc: Katherine Simpson 9(2)(a); Peter Henderson 9(2)(a); Attinder Singh 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Funding School Buses from Pookeno to stop

Kia ora Vishal

Unfortunately, I cannot release that information as it is commercially sensitive and could impact on any tenders the group may wish to run in the future (as I understand too, they wish to run a tender relatively soon). You can request this information directly from the group, however I'd advise against this as per the above.

Cheers,
Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

PH +64 800 287 272 | DDI 9(2)(a) | Mobile 9(2)(a)

From: Vishal Ramduny 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, 7 September 2023 11:11 am
To: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Cc: Katherine Simpson 9(2)(a); Peter Henderson 9(2)(a); Attinder Singh 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Funding School Buses from Pookeno to stop

Kia ora Reade,

Can you advise of the actual dollar cost of the proposed funding withdrawal for the Pōkeno to Tūākau component of the MoE's school bus service?

Ngaa mihi,

Vishal.

Vishal Ramduny

Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships Manager |
Rautaki me Mahi Tahi Kaiwhakamahere

Waikato District Council

Te Kaunihera aa Takiwaa o Waikato

9(2)(a) Call Free 0800 492 452 ■ DDI M

From: Reade Nikora 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 10:44 AM
To: Vishal Ramduny 9(2)(a)
Cc: Katherine Simpson 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Funding School Buses from Pookeno to stop

Mōrena Vishal

Please see attached joint briefing note for your Mayor and Councillors.

Do let me know if you have any questions.

Ngā mihi
Reade.

Reade Nikora | Senior Regional Transport Advisor | School Transport
Te Pou Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure & Digital

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**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education



Joint briefing note

Franklin Transport Network – directly resourced school transport assistance funding

Date: 4 August 2023

To: Waikato District Council Mayor Jacqui Church; Cr. Kandi Ngataki; Cr. Eugene Patterson

From: Rhona Hewitt, Ministry of Education; Vincent Kuo, Waikato Regional Council

Ministry of Education Summary

1. The Ministry is funded through Vote Education, receiving a dedicated school transport appropriation to assist caregivers in meeting their responsibility to get their children to school by helping students overcome barriers to education.
2. The Ministry is required to spend government funds in line with agreed policy. This means that school transport assistance is only available to those students who meet all three of the following eligibility criteria:
 - a. They are attending their closest (State or State-integrated) school they can enrol at
 - b. They live more than a certain distance from school:
 - 3.2km for Years 1 - 8
 - 4.8km for Years 9 - 13
 - c. There is no suitable public transport available.

“Suitable” public transport means, public transport must travel within:

 - 2.4 km of the roadside gate of the student's home, and
 - 2.4 km of the closest appropriate school
3. In respect of school transport services, the Ministry of Education is a provider of ‘last resort’ – where a suitable public transport service exists, the Ministry of Education is legally unable to provide a duplicate service¹.
4. The Ministry routinely reviews all Ministry-funded School Transport bus services to ensure ongoing alignment with policy.
5. The Ministry operates a school transport assistance funding scheme called Direct Resourcing (DR) where schools are bulk funded to arrange school transport assistance (STA) for their eligible students.
6. The amount of funding that each DR school or network receives is based on the number and location of their eligible students and Ministry designed bus routes. The school bus routes designed for funding purposes are developed in accordance with our route design criteria (see Appendix 1). Funding is also provided to the DR schools/network for administration of the STA.
7. DR schools and networks do not have to operate the Ministry's designed routes, they can design their own transport routes, and they can also choose how they use the funding to provide STA to eligible

¹ Waka Kotahi guidelines for regional public transport plans pg 37

students. Assistance can be through a place on a vehicle provided by a transport service provider/school (e.g. van /bus owned by school), or by financial assistance provided direct to caregivers.

8. The Franklin Transport Network Group (FTNG) is a DR network comprised of six local schools in the North Waikato area:
 - Tuakau College (Head school)
 - Pōkeno Primary School
 - Mangatawhiri Primary School
 - Pukekawa Primary School
 - Te Kohanga Primary School
 - Onewhero Area School
9. In late 2022, the FTNG requested that their DR school transport funding be reviewed. This review commenced in March 2023.
10. FTNG's current funding is based on thirteen Ministry designed routes, equivalent to 901.45 kms. Two of the thirteen routes were designed to transport eligible students living in Mangatawhiri and Mercer to Tuakau College. The current funding FTNG receives is not based on any Ministry designed routes providing for students from Pōkeno who attend Tuakau College as these students were ineligible for STA at the time of the previous funding review and remain ineligible.
11. We believe FTNG has chosen to operate several bus routes (possibly 3 routes) between Pōkeno and Tuakau. The Ministry does not hold details of the actual bus routes FTNG operates, this information would need to be sought from FTNG.
12. We understand FTNG has made the decision to carry ineligible students on its bus routes and that some or all of these students may be paying a fare.
13. When a funding review of a DR network is undertaken, the Ministry sources the most up-to-date student information from the DR schools before designing school bus routes that the funding is based on.
14. In June 2023, we shared with the FTNG the preliminary outcome of the funding review which showed a reduction in the funding by approximately 20%.
15. This is due to the review finding that the actual number of students eligible for school transport assistance in the FTNG has decreased by 17.39% since 2020.
16. Pōkeno is an area of significant growth as there is a projected population increase of 463% between 2016 – 2045². This projection is evident in the roll growth at Pōkeno Primary School, with student numbers at the school increasing by 110% between 2018 and 2022, the largest roll increase of any school in the FTNG. The majority of these students live in housing developments within a 3.2km radius of the school, deeming them ineligible for school transport assistance as they live too close to Pōkeno Primary School to be considered eligible.
17. The FTNG has submitted written feedback to the proposed funding review. Their feedback highlights small route amendments, in line with our route design guidelines, that will be investigated by our team. The submission also notes that FTNG has engaged with Waikato Regional Council, and the following was discussed:

² [Waikato District Council, Pokeno local area blueprint](#)

- a. The public transport service is temporary.
- b. The funding for the public transport service is not guaranteed by Waka Kotahi, WRC or Waikato District council (WDC).
- c. The existing buses do not have capacity to accommodate the 315 students that could possibly use the bus from Pōkeno to Tuakau College.
- d. WRC has no plans or funding to increase the number of buses and provide additional bus services during these peak times.
- e. WRC have no plans to undertake significant changes to the existing services and funding to meet the needs of the College.

WRC Summary

- 18. The existing #44 Pokeno to Pukekohe bus service is a trial service which launched in January 2021. The service is contracted by WRC and funded by Waka Kotahi (51%) and WDC (49%)
- 19. The current trial will end in July 2024 as per the funding agreement with Waka Kotahi.
- 20. For the current trial to continue, this will be contingent on:
 - a. Waka Kotahi agreeing to fund their 51% share in their next 2024-27 National Land Transport Programme (an application has been put forward by WRC to secure this funding and the funding outcome won't be released until early next year)
 - b. WDC agreeing to fund their 49% share in their next 2024-27 Long Term Plan (the funding outcome won't be confirmed until June next year).
- 21. If Waka Kotahi cease to continue funding their 51% share of the service, then WDC will need to consider whether they are able to fund the full 100% cost of the service.
- 22. WRC do not intend to fully fund this service or to take over the 49% local share funding from WDC should WDC not receive this funding through their LTP process.
- 23. The existing buses do not have capacity to accommodate all 315 students traveling between Pokeno and Tuakau College. There is also no plan to improve the current service levels.
- 24. There are four AM buses that arrive at Tuakau College from Pokeno every weekday morning before 9:00am. At this point in time, WRC have no plans (and funding) to increase the number of buses and provide additional bus services during these peak times.
- 25. The existing buses depart Tuakau College for Pokeno at 2:18pm, 3:18pm, 3:48pm, 4:46pm and 5:28pm (as well as more service in the evening). While WRC may not be able to provide a new PM service, options to make adjustments to the existing timetable could be considered. It is worth noting that any substantial changes to the timetable may result in substantial funding requirements which WRC may not be in a position to commit to and, therefore, WRC may not be able to meet the full needs of the College.
- 26. WRC are, unfortunately, not in a position to offer any more services than what is currently there for the foreseeable future.

Appendix

Number	Title
1	School Transport Route Design Criteria
2	School Transport Assistance Eligibility Criteria

Designing school bus routes

Information for schools on how school bus routes are designed



School bus routes are designed by the Ministry of Education based on the following key design principles:

- Bus routes are designed to transport as many eligible students as efficiently as possible.
- A minimum of eight eligible students is required for a bus route to be considered.
- Routes typically travel down main roads and students are expected to make their own way to a central bus stop.
- Buses generally travel as far as the fourth furthest eligible student on any given road.
- The route design takes the following into consideration:
 - location of eligible students
 - location of bus stops
 - safety
 - timetables
 - Ministry cost limits

Key roles in designing school bus routes

Roles	Responsibilities
Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs Ministry-funded bus routes for eligible students within current policy parameters • Undertakes route reviews to ensure they are still fit-for-purpose • Approves new routes or changes to current routes • Engages with schools on proposed route changes
Transport Service Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks that route amendments can be safely executed • Selects safe bus stops • Sets the route timetable
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides current student data to the Ministry • Advises caregivers of any changes to bus routes/stops

Route decisions

How do you decide where the school bus will travel?

While a minimum of eight eligible students is required for a bus service to be considered, where the route travels depends on the location and number of the students.

When we design our routes, we must ensure that all parts of the route will benefit four or more eligible students. This means that in some cases, the school bus will only travel to a safe bus stop location that is near the student who lives the fourth furthest on that road. The other students are then expected to make their own way to a central bus stop.

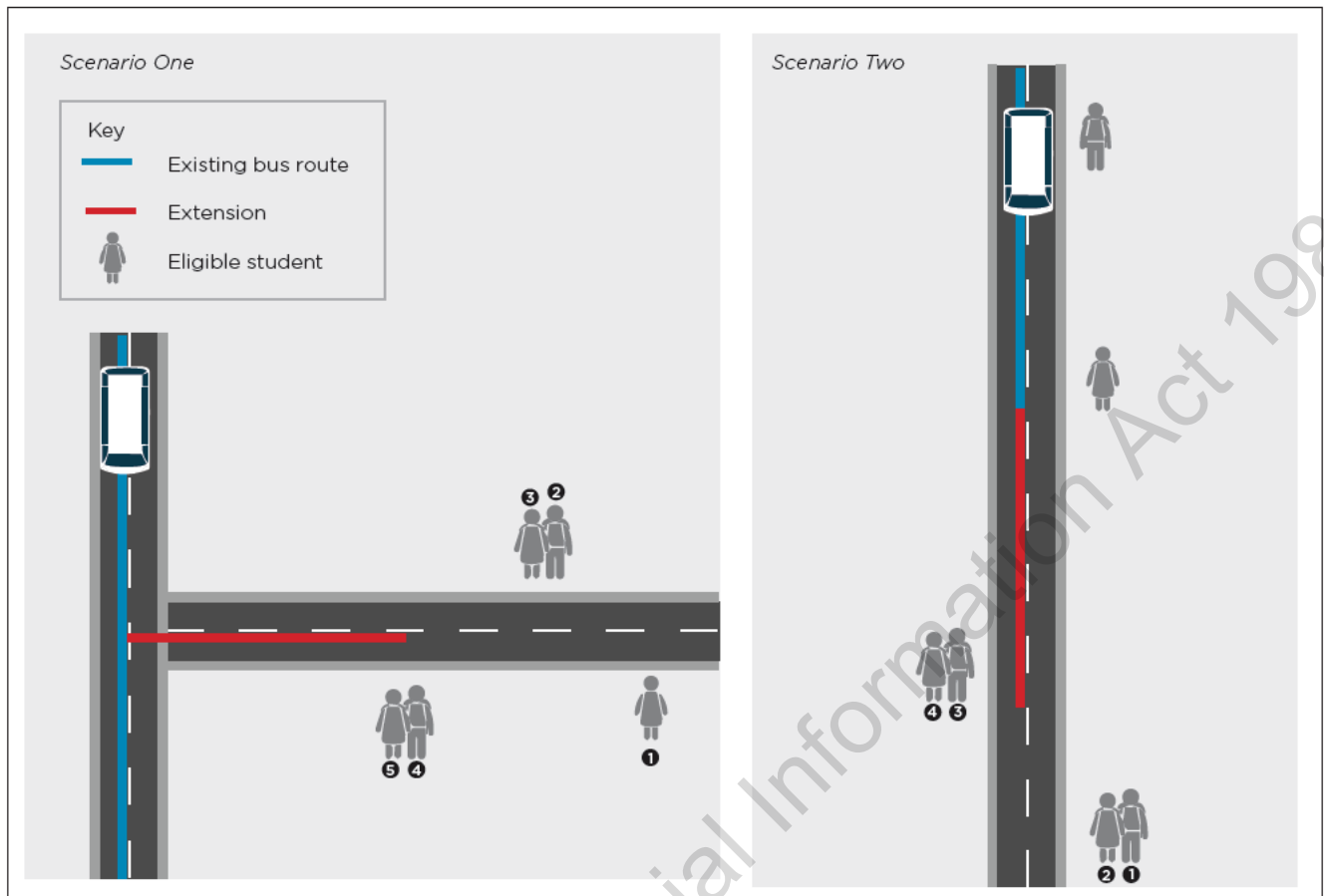
Route extensions

Can a bus route be extended?

Ministry school bus services usually travel along main arterial roads; however extensions may be considered along main or side roads if:

- there are four or more eligible students living on or around the proposed extension
- the distance to the home of the furthest eligible student is at least 2.4 kilometres from the road the bus currently travels along
- the road the extension is to travel on is suitable, including the ability for the bus to turn around.

Common route extension scenarios



How far down a side or main road can the extension of the route go?

In many cases, the school bus may travel only as far the student who lives the fourth furthest from the school bus route. The exact point that the bus will travel to will also depend on where the nearest safe bus stop is located.

Timetables

How are timetables set?

The general timetable rules are:

- students aren't picked up before 7am
- students should be dropped off by 5pm
- ideally, students shouldn't be on the vehicle longer than 60 minutes

Please note:

- There may be exceptions due to local circumstances, such as route length, school starting times, and the number of schools on the route
- Students may be required to wait on school grounds for their school bus before or after school.

The timetables are set by your transport service provider.

Bus stops

How are bus stops selected?

Your transport service provider is responsible for determining the pick-up and drop-off bus stops along the route. They are also responsible for ensuring that these locations are fit for purpose.

Please contact your transport service provider in the first instance if you have a query or concern about a bus stop.

How do students travel to their closest bus stop?

Caregivers are responsible for ensuring their children get safely to and from bus stops. If the distance they need to travel is more than 2.4 km, their caregiver may be eligible for a [Conveyance Allowance](#) to contribute towards the cost of getting to and from the school bus stop. Please note, [Transfer of Eligibility](#) students are not eligible for a conveyance allowance.

More information? Please contact your local [Regional Transport Advisor](#).

School Transport Assistance

INFORMATION FOR CAREGIVERS

What is School Transport Assistance?

School Transport Assistance is provided by the Ministry of Education to help parents overcome barriers to education and meet their responsibility to get their children to school. This assistance is provided when distance and/or accessibility may be a barrier for students attending the closest school that they can enrol at. Students must meet certain criteria to qualify for school transport assistance.

What's the eligibility criteria for School Transport Assistance?

There are three eligibility criteria that students must meet to qualify for School Transport Assistance:

Criteria 1	<p>The school must be the closest state or state-integrated school where the student can enrol.</p> <p>For students attending Maori medium schools – which must either deliver Te Reo at Level 1, or at Level 2 and 51% or more of instruction is in Te Reo – whichever Maori medium school is chosen will be considered the closest, in recognition of the importance of iwi and hapu affiliation to a Maori-medium education.</p>
Criteria 2	<p>Students must live more than a certain distance from the school, depending on their year level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 1-8: at least 3.2 kilometres from the school • Years 9-13: at least 4.8 kilometres from the school <p>These distances are measured by the shortest public road or pedestrian route from the home roadside gate to the school's front gate.</p>
Criteria 3	<p>There must be no suitable public transport options.</p> <p>Suitable public transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travels within 2.4km of the roadside gate of the student's home • travels within 2.4km of the closest appropriate school • departs after 7am and arrives before school starts • leaves no later than one hour after school finishes • does not require the student to change buses more than once

Check out the School Transport Assistance [video](#) on the Ministry of Education's website for more information.

How do I apply for school transport assistance for my child?

To apply you'll need to speak to your child's school. Every school has a Bus Controller who will be able to advise you on whether your child is eligible for school transport assistance and what school transport options are available.

If your child is eligible, they may be able to get a place on a school bus if there is one that travels near your child's home. If there isn't a bus, you may be paid a conveyance allowance to assist with your transport costs. The school's Bus Controller will assist you with applying for a conveyance allowance.

Can my child get school transport assistance if they don't attend their nearest school?

If a student who is eligible for transport assistance to their closest school, decides to attend a school that is further away, they may still be able to access school transport assistance. In these situations, the transport assistance would only be in the form of a place on a school bus within the chosen school's Transport Eligibility Zone (TEZ) i.e. caregivers are not entitled to a Conveyance Allowance.

To see if your child qualifies for assistance, the Ministry uses its eligibility criteria again. If your child doesn't attend their closest school, they will be assessed based on the distance between the chosen school and its TEZ boundary.

Your child's chosen school will let you know if your child qualifies for transport assistance.

Please note that parents or caregivers are responsible for transporting their child to the pick up/drop off bus stop within the chosen school's TEZ. This bus stop must be an existing school bus stop as school bus routes are only designed around students who are attending their closest school. School bus routes are not altered for students who are not attending their closest school.

For more information, check out the Transfer of Eligibility factsheet available on the Ministry of Education's website (www.education.govt.nz).

I have shared custody of my child. Can my child still get school transport assistance?

Yes, if you have shared custody of your child and meet the eligibility criteria from at least one of your child's home addresses. However, if the assistance is a conveyance allowance, it can only be paid to one caregiver.

More information

- Talk to your child's school Bus Controller
- Ministry of Education's [website](http://www.education.govt.nz)

