



09 NOV 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 12 October 2018 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information in relation to a child locked on a Golden Bay Coachlines (GBC) school bus for several hours after it arrived at Takaka Primary School:

- *I'm sure an investigation was carried out following this. I would like to receive the results of this investigation.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Four documents were identified in scope of your request. The table below details the information we are releasing to you:

	Date	Document Type	Document Title	Recommendation
1		Incident Report	School Transport Services Incident Report	Release in part. Contact information not in the public domain and personal information withheld, s9(2)(a)
1a	20 August 2018	Letter		Release in part. Contact information not in the public domain and personal information withheld, s9(2)(a)
2	22 August 2018	Email	Subj: Onekaka Bus	Release in part. Personal information withheld, s9(2)(a)
3	22 August 2018	Email	Subj: Student Locked in Bus, Takaka Primary, 21 Aug 18	Release in part. Contact information not in the public domain withheld, s9(2)(a)
4	7 September 2018	Email	Subj: Performance Improvement Meeting, GBC and Takaka Primary School post-incident	Release in part. Contact information not in the public domain and personal information withheld, s9(2)(a)

I am withholding some information under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons. I have identified no public interest considerations sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold this information at this time.

I can confirm the Takaka Primary School principal, Board of Trustees chairperson and GBC were all satisfied with the outcome of the investigation. GBC now has processes in place to ensure an incident like this will not happen again. These processes include a daily pre-departure check that all drivers are required to complete prior to and following each bus run. This checklist includes:

- "Passenger Clearance AM" and "Passenger Clearance PM"
- "Bus must be swept out at the completion of any run and lost property handed in immediately"

In relation to the other concerns you raised, the Ministry spends around \$190 million a year on school transport assistance, helping around 100,000 students get to school. The remaining 680,000 students make their way to school without ministry assistance, most by private car.

School transport eligibility is assessed by the Ministry in a nationally-consistent manner, offering assistance to students who live far from their closest school. While we acknowledge it may be difficult, caregivers are ultimately responsible for ensuring their children get to and from school. The Ministry is not currently planning to change the eligibility criteria for school transport assistance.

We are aware that GBC has decided to stop ineligible students from travelling on its services. This decision is entirely at the discretion of the bus company.

We must reiterate that any students eligible for school transport assistance will continue to receive our assistance, either as a place on a bus, where available, or via a conveyance allowance.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Kim Shannon
Head of Education Infrastructure Service

cc: Derek Lucic, Director of Education for Nelson / Marlborough / West Coast

School Transport Services Incident Report

FOR ALL INJURY INCIDENTS – THE MINISTRY IS TO BE ADVISED BY PHONE
IMMEDIATELY – AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
(ALL OTHER INCIDENTS WITHIN 24 HOURS)
Do not leave a voice mail message – keep trying one of the numbers overleaf

Name of Reporting Transport Service Provider Company:

Golden Bay Coachlines

Particulars of Incident:

(please tick – ☒ as appropriate)

Injury: <input type="checkbox"/> SEE BELOW	Illness: <input type="checkbox"/>	Near Miss: <input type="checkbox"/>	Crash: <input type="checkbox"/>	Notifiable Event: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If Involving Injury:

(appropriate)

<div></div>	Student Name (if known at time of reporting): <div></div>
School Name: Takaka Primary School	School Contact Person: Jenny Bennett (Principal) School Contact Ph Number: 035259035

Severity of Injury (if known)

Minor (i.e. bruising/scratches) <input type="checkbox"/>	Major (i.e. shock/broken bones/hospitalisation [inpatient or outpatient]) <input type="checkbox"/>	Fatality <input type="checkbox"/>
Brief Initial Description: Student left in bus.		
Name of Hospital (if applicable):		

Daily Bus / Technology / SESTA Information:

Date:	Time:
MoE Route #:	SESTA Cluster Name:
Location:	
Initial Incident Description:	

If not a MoE Route – is it (please circle): Directly Resourced / School Charter / Urban

In Attendance:

(please tick – ☒ as appropriate)

Police: <input type="checkbox"/>	Fire: <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambulance: <input type="checkbox"/>
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School Bus Signs Displayed:

(please tick – ☒ as appropriate) YES: ☐ / NO: ☐

Incident Reported to the Ministry By:

Name: Lorrain Crawford	Title: General Manager	Contact Ph Number: <div></div>
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Ministry Contact Staff:

Phil Knight TCM – Auckland	Cell Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@education.govt.nz
Gary Northcott TCM – Palmerston North	Cell Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@education.govt.nz
Pete Patterson TCM – Napier (& Top of South Island)	Cell Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@education.govt.nz
John Doesburg TCM – Dunedin	Cell Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@education.govt.nz
Bernadette Scannell Commercial Relationship Manager	Cell Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@education.govt.nz
Bruce Chase Senior Advisor – Health and Safety	Cell Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@education.govt.nz

Ministry School Transport Team: school.transport@education.govt.nz

WorkSafe: 0800-030-040 (24 hours)

Police: 111

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

GOLDEN BAY COACHLINES

98 Commercial Street, Takaka
Phone: (03) 525 8352
Email: accounts@gbcoachlines.co.nz

20 August 2018

Peter Patterson
Ministry of Education
[REDACTED]@education.govt.nz

Dear Pete

Re: Student left in School Bus

Sharon our Fleet Manager received a call from Corina at Takaka Primary School at about 12.30pm this afternoon advising that a student was missing. The students name is [REDACTED] aged [REDACTED] years.

Corina wanted to know if the driver had picked up the student this morning. She advised Corina that she was unsure if the driver would be able to identify (or know) the student involved but would call him and ask.

Sharon called the driver, who did not believe he had picked up any primary school children this morning. Sharon called the school back to advise this, and also gave the drivers home phone number to call direct if required. (The school also called the driver.)

Corina asked that the bus be re-checked as the parents had left [REDACTED] at the bus stop this morning. Sharon immediately went and checked the bus and [REDACTED] was located at approx. 12.55pm. [REDACTED] was found calm but a little emotional when exiting the bus to known members of Takaka Primary staff.

Corina rang again shortly after [REDACTED] was located to advise that it had been reported to the Police that [REDACTED] was missing, and that media were possibly involved.

I called the driver and had a discussion regarding the situation. He was very upset as he really didn't think he had any primary students onboard.

This mornings bus runs where complicated due to torrential rain and some surface flooding. Students were very eager to board the bus due to weather, the Onekaka Bus stop also has approximately 35 students at this stop. It is easy to miss seeing an individual student.

When buses arrived at the Takaka Primary School they were unable to unload at the usual location as this area was flooded. All buses had to go along by there day park position. No

students identified themselves when the bus stopped. Our driver is in the habit of clearing the bus after each run and can only presume that the change of process this morning broke his routine.

I have spoken with Jenny Bennett (Principal) at Takaka Primary School at approx. 2.15pm. She has advised that the buses were checked by staff at Takaka Primary at 12.10pm but they had not located [REDACTED]. They however, did not enter the vehicles.

I have asked Jenny to advise the parents of [REDACTED] that I would like to speak to them and apologise for the situation. I have also asked her for their contact information.

We have a daily pre-departure check sheet that all drivers need to complete prior to and following each run. This includes the question "Passenger Clearance AM" and "Passenger Clearance PM".

Obviously, this is not working as well as we would like, so we will be including the additional rules of "Bus must be swept out at the completion of any run and lost property handed in immediately".

Whilst I take full responsibility for [REDACTED] being left in the bus, I am disappointed it took so long for us to be alerted to this.

Kind regards



Lorraine Crawford
General Manager

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From: [Lorraine Crawford](#)
To: [Peter Patterson](#)
Subject: Onekaka Bus
Date: Wednesday, 22 August 2018 4:07:38 p.m.

Draft

Dear [REDACTED]

Thanks for taking the time to speak to me this afternoon [REDACTED]. As we discussed I accept full responsibility for [REDACTED] being left in the bus and am deeply sorry that this happened to him.

Following in this email I will document the way things happened as I know them for you to have a look through. As we also discussed please get in touch with me regarding anything that you may want to query or add.

Monday, 20 August 2018

8.10am School Bus collected students from the Onekaka Bus Stop. The driver noted that there was a huge surge of students due to the torrential rain and they were eager to board the bus. He did not site any primary students.

8.25am Students dropped at Golden Bay High School

8.28am Arrived at Takaka Primary School - due to flooding buses were unable to unload the students at the normal location and had to drive along to the permanent parking location. The driver noted that it was an unusual day as he normally has a dozen or so primary students and had none (that he thought) that day. No students exited the bus at Takaka Primary School.

The driver remained in the bus for a few minutes and made a cell phone call to his wife to arrange where she would collect him from. He then left the bus and walked out Boundary Road exit.

12.10pm Jenny advised me (later in the day) that Takaka Primary School staff had checked the buses for [REDACTED] but did not enter the buses. They had walked along and banged on all of the windows but no-one responded.

12.30pm Sharon (our Fleet Manager) received a call from Corina at the Takaka Primary School to advise that a student was missing that would have travelled on the Onekaka Bus. I was away on my lunch break when this call came in. Sharon immediately called the driver. He advised that he had no primary students on the bus that morning. Sharon called Corina back and advised Corina his reply. She also provided his direct dial phone number for Corina to call him which she did.

12.50pm Corina called again (I was back from lunch) wanting all of the buses checked. I arranged for Sharon to go straight to the school and check all of the buses and then travel on to the Onekaka Bus stop to make sure [REDACTED] wasn't still there.

12.55pm Sharon located [REDACTED] in the Onekaka Bus at the school. [REDACTED] was calm when she arrived but was a little emotional when handed into the care of Takaka Primary School staff that [REDACTED] new.

12.58pm Sharon advised me that [REDACTED] had been located.

1.00pm I called the driver to discuss that [REDACTED] had been located in the bus. He was very upset that this had happened. He was also very angry with himself for not having checked properly. We agreed to a meeting regarding this at 4.00pm on the completion and clearance of all passengers on the PM Bus Run.

1.10pm I advised the Ministry of Education of what had happened.

2.15pm Jenny Bennett called me to ask that I write a letter to the Board of Trustees around policy's and procedure's that we have in place. I advised Jenny that I wanted to speak to [REDACTED] parents but did not have their contact information but also understood that you needed time to breathe but didn't want to leave it to long. She said that she would add this information to a letter she was giving to you the following day. Once you had approved this she would pass on the contact information.

4.00pm Had meeting with the driver around what had happened. Policies and Procedures etc

Tuesday, 21 August 2018.

New rule added:

In addition to Passenger Clearance checks each AM & PM "All passenger buses must be completely swept out and lost property handed in at the completion of any run".

Wednesday, 22 August 2018

1.24pm Jenny Bennett emailed that your contact information was available at the school office for me.

1.29pm I called Corina at the School office for your information but she had a student medical issue happening and asked me to call back in 10 minutes.

1.43pm I call Corina again but she was still busy and said she would call me.

2.11pm Corina called me and provided your contact details

2.15pm I called [REDACTED]

Once again, I am sorry that this happened to [REDACTED] I am unable to answer what happened in the morning at the School as I do not have this information.

*kindest Regards
Lorraine Crawford
General Manager
Golden Bay Coachlines Ltd*

From: [Peter Patterson](#)
To: [JennyBennett](#)
Cc: [Niall Duncan](#); [Graeme Sims](#)
Subject: Student Locked in Bus, Takaka Primary, 21 Aug 18
Date: Wednesday, 22 August 2018 4:59:00 p.m.
Attachments: [image006.png](#)

Kia ora, Jenny.

Thank you for your frank korero yesterday around the incident and other matters affecting school transport in Takaka. The Ministry of Education is seriously concerned that such an incident occurred more than once in your area.

The transport service provider, Golden Bay Coachlines (GBC), were asked to explain the circumstances, the action taken upon receiving the report of the missing student, and remedial action taken to prevent a recurrence. They have done so. We now rely on their staff to act on the instructions.

In addition, soon after receiving the contact details for the mother of the student from Takaka Primary on 22 August, the General Manager telephoned and then emailed her unreserved apologies for the incident having occurred.

Policies regarding checking the interior of buses by GBC drivers post-trip have been instigated and will be rigidly enforced. All of the GBC staff are apologetic and disappointed in their company's error, and are committed to performing to a higher standard in future.

In terms of performance, the Ministry of Education will be meeting with GBC management and available staff on the morning of 6 September at the GBC head office. If you are available, I invite you to attend along with Ministry staff in order that you can raise issues regarding school transport that you have encountered, and perhaps make suggestions for improvement so that student safety may be improved on the bus routes. GBC management have agreed that such a meeting can take place.

Please advise if you can attend.

Nga mihi,
Pete

Pete Patterson | Transport Contract Manager

DDI [REDACTED]
8A Lever Street, Napier

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We get the job done *Ka oti i a matou nga mahi*

We are respectful, we listen, we learn *He ropu manaaki, he ropu whakarongo, he ropu ako matou*

We back ourselves and others to win *Ka manawanui ki a matou, me etahi ake kia wikitoria*

We work together for maximum impact *Ka mahi ngatahi mo te tuinga nui tonu*

Great results are our bottom line *Ko nga huanga tino pai a matou whainga mutunga*

Ministry of Education logo



Out of scope



From: Peter Patterson

Sent: Friday, 7 September 2018 10:33 a.m.

To: Bernadette Scannell <[REDACTED]@education.govt.nz>

Subject: Performance Improvement Meeting, GBC and Takaka Primary School post-incident

Bern, Morena. You'll be aware that a Golden Bay Coachlines driver delivered the students to Takaka Primary on 21 August, and locked up the bus without checking it. A [REDACTED] yr old remained aboard the bus for an as-yet unexplained reason until around 1230. [REDACTED] was not noticed missing by the school until after 1100, and the bus company was not contacted by the school until sometime after that, and long after school staff had conducted a cursory check (banged the windows) of the buses parked at the school. Processes have since been put in place at the TSP in an effort to prevent a repeat. The school has also adjusted their roll-checking procedures. What transpired after the incident was an email blame-game between TSP and Takaka Primary Principal as to who was more at fault, with each blaming the other for failings, although GBC accepted from the outset that their driver had caused the incident by failing to clear the bus before locking it up and going home. The student's parents appear to have sided with the school as to who was most at fault.

In an effort to improve driver performance, and improve the communication between the Principal and GBC, I managed to get both parties to agree to meet at GBC yesterday. Niall and I attended as referees/moderators. Processes were agreed, and both parties agreed not to blame each other for incidents in future, and to open discussions earlier next time.

Post-meeting, Niall and I were invited to Takaka Primary to meet with a "concerned parent" who did not attend the meeting at GBC, but she did not show up at the school. Her name was [REDACTED]

Discussions with the Principal indicated that she was very pleased with the outcome of the meeting with GBC yesterday, and she is hoping for smoother processes when both parties are dealing with incidents and complaints in future. Telephone call received from GBC GM this morning indicated they were happy with the way the meeting had been run, and thanked me for my background work in preparing the principal's expectations, for moderating the discussion, in future.

Pete

Pete Patterson | Transport Contract Manager

DDI [REDACTED]

8A Lever Street, Napier

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