

Appendix A

Email #	Date received	Release decision
1	16 May 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
2	18 May 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
3	25 June 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
4	3 June 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
5	3 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
5 a		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
6	3 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
7	3 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
7 a 1		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

Email #	Date received	Release decision
7 a 2		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
7 a 3		Released in full.
7 a 4		Released in full as publicly available.
8	6 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
8 a 1		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
8 a 2		Released in full as publicly available.
8 a 3		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
8 a 4		Released in full.
9	7 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
10	10 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
11	13 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

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11 a 1		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
11 a 2		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
11 a 3		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
11 a 4		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
11 a 5		Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
12	15 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
13	15 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
14	17 July 2020	Released in part with some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

Email 1

9(2)(a)

Sent: Saturday, 16 May 2020

8:22 PM

To: C Hipkins (MIN) <c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz>

Subject: Money Paid For School Trip Cancelled Due to Covid 19 - Ref: C014424

Hi,

I am 9(2)(a) at Feilding High School.

We have paid a total of \$6500 to Feilding High School for a school trip that was meant to go to the USA in April this year.

The trip was arranged by the school with Student Horizons.

As the trip was cancelled I have asked the school to refund our money.

To date the Principal, Nathan Stewart has stated that it is not up to the school to refund us and we must wait to see if Student Horizons will offer a refund.

I have asked for the legality of this given we had an agreement with the school and paid the money into the school account. Any contract with Student Horizons was between them and the school.

We are now stuck between the school saying no refund and Student Horizons saying minimal refund available to the school.

I would appreciate some assistance to get our money back as I feel Feilding High School have an obligation to give a full refund for a cancelled School trip and they can then battle with Student Horizons if they choose to do so. Hoping you can help.

Yours sincerely

9(2)(a)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Email 2

9(2)(a)

Sent: Monday, 18 May 2020 12:05 PM

To: Rt. Hon Jacinda Ardern <Jacinda.Ardern@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: Student Horizon Travel's impact and influence on the education sector in NZ

Good morning

My 9(2)(a) at Mount Albert Grammar. 9(2)(a) was due to travel to Europe in April 2020 as part of a school trip via Student Horizons. The trip was visiting sites that illustrated many of the topics 9(2)(a) had studied at school and the itinerary was strongly aligned with 9(2)(a) NCEA curriculum.

Like so many students 9(2)(a) worked to part pay for 9(2)(a) fare and spending money, while we supported 9(2)(a) with the balance of trip funds. The trip costs were paid in three installments as follows:

- 22nd May 2019 \$1,120
- 22nd July 2019 \$1,490
- 28th January 2020 \$4,300

There was additional cost (\$165) for travel insurance, paid separately on 8 May 2019. Our total outlay to Student Horizons via Mt Albert Grammar was \$7,075.

The school called a meeting on 4 March 2020 to advise parents that the trip was cancelled. This action, although disappointing at the time was correct in the face of a developing international situation. The school subsequently cancelled all trips for 2020.

The school was clear that the decision to cancel the trip was their call to make as Student Horizons' contractual relationship was with the school and not the individual parents/students involved. It is important to note that the Student Horizons contract that parents were required to enter into limited Student Horizons liability for refunds after certain dates. At the meeting, Student Horizons offered a refund of up to 45% (depending on how much money they could recover from their contracted suppliers) out of goodwill.

The travel insurance was void due to a pandemic exclusion

The school has undertaken to recover the maximum amount of refund they can via Student Horizons on behalf of the parent group. This could take some months. It was made clear that the parent group should leave the situation in their hands.

To date, this tour group has received a total refund of \$8000.00, approximately \$250.00 for each student.

We, as a family are under no illusions about the future of the travel company involved and remain realistic about the refund. There has been commentary in the media about this issue and there have been a number of complaints made to the Commerce Commission. We remain very interested in the outcome.

I am concerned that the education sector does not appear to be regarding this situation with the seriousness it warrants.

Without being overly dramatic this situation is nationwide, involves hundreds of students and

millions of dollars in parent paid travel costs. The value of my 9(2)(a) April trip represented approximately \$250,000 in business alone for Student Horizons. I understand from Student Horizons that they had 12 school trips leaving Auckland in April 2020. If we apply the same assumption that each trip is valued at \$250,000, the collective financial loss by Auckland based parents in April 2020 alone is over \$3,000,000.

These values are approximate as the parent community has been exited from discussions and lockdown has prevented parent groups co-ordinating in a constructive way. The parent groups are also exited from on-going negotiations, on the basis that the relevant travel contracts are between Student Horizons and the individual schools. We have been encouraged to trust that the best is being done on our behalf. While it probably is, I am left with the following questions:

- Has there been a larger financial loss sustained by fee-paying parents via schools in New Zealand's educational history? If not, has this growing situation come to the Ministry's attention, and is there an action plan?
- Are schools appropriately resourced and sufficiently sophisticated to exercise their fiduciary duty on behalf of parents, noting the large sums of money in play? As an example, despite persistent inquiry at the time relating to daily news of increasing concern of pandemic risk in Europe, the school accepted and handed on the final payment of \$4300.00 to Student Horizons at the end of January. It remains unclear as to whether they sought specific advice regarding the threat of a pandemic, the consequences that school travellers might face and whether final monies should be paid to their travel providers.
- Student Horizons appears to be a large travel provider in the education sector in New Zealand and Australia. Did individual schools undertake some form of due diligence in their selection? Schools cannot sidestep the fact they have considerable influence on parents' decisions and the school's endorsement of a business to the parent community in this instance shouldn't be underestimated.
- Should this situation be reviewed in the form of an independent inquiry, noting the numbers of affected students and the value of the parent community's collective financial loss?
- Is the Ministry confident that all matters pertaining to the situation have been dealt with fairly and in an open and transparent manner? It was jarring to observe that Student Horizons are sponsors (not supporters) of both the Association of Boys Schools New Zealand (ABSNZ) and a gold sponsor of the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ). ABSNZ endorsed Stuart Horizons as recently as last week.

From the outside, it appears as if the school-based travel industry has expanded beyond the usual Ministry checks and balances as it was perceived by schools to be "cost neutral" and off the books.

My motivation for writing this letter is as a voice for those parents and kids who made financial sacrifices and worked hard for what would have been an amazing opportunity. It is partly in response to what I consider to be an unsafe assumption, voiced in recent mainstream media (and within some school Boards of Trustees), that the "parents must have been able to afford to pay for their kids if they choose to travel, it was their choice" – that somehow this money was discretionary money for all families affected. It is my experience in many instances that families put in significant effort to raise the money required – fundraising activities, second and third jobs in some instances, taking on credit card debt and contributions from extended family members.

In the case of sports and music trips, students were selected as part of a school team, which was a source of considerable pride for both the family and the school. In my experience, in all instances, parents made this choice and the sacrifices it entailed, in support of their kid's ongoing education.

My request is that you, as our elected representative, review the situation to ensure that appropriate controls and oversight were in place by the Ministry of Education. At the very least, the Ministry should derive what lessons it can from this experience and put suitable controls in place for student travel in the future. This would also go a long way to restoring confidence in the parent community who have been side-lined by the current approach.

I look forward to your response.

9(2)(a)

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the text in this block, starting below the word "9(2)(a)" and extending to the right and downwards.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Email 3

Jeremy Barnes

9(2)(a)

Sent: Thursday, 25 June 2020 9:29 AM

To: Enquiries National <enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>

Subject: Ministry of Education guidelines for international travel for students

Could you please confirm MoE policy for NZ high schools on guidelines for international travel for NZ secondary school groups?

Particularly policy on TAANZ agents.

Also we would like confirmation if the Ministry endorse, or have endorsed, the agent, Student Horizons.

9(2)(a)

Email 4

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, 2 June 2020 6:52 AM
To: Enquiries Auckland <enquiries.auckland@education.govt.nz>
Subject: Meeting regarding Student Horizons concerns please

Good morning,

Could I please request a meeting with Isabel Evans.

As one of the parents directly affected by the Student Horizons debacle currently unfolding I would like to be able to offer reasonable and fair advice to other parents about how to make official MOE complaints where warranted. Some parents are angry at the way schools have handled their money and not supported them. I believe some of these complaints are justified, some not. The situation at Westlake and the ABSNZ is particularly egregious, then at the other end of the spectrum we have found EGGS to be unwilling to help, but quietly supportive and at least honest and transparent. Please see below my advice to other parents so far -

As it seems to be a universal experience that schools are providing no assistance with our concerns, I would strongly encourage direct complaints to the MOE where you feel your school has mishandled this situation. In our personal experience EGGS have not helped as such, but do seem to be doing what they can, and like all schools are hampered by privacy law. Auckland Grammar and Westlake however have been deliberately obstructive and not transparent about the connections between Jamie Wansey and the ABSNZ / funding and "kickbacks" the schools have received in sponsorship over the years. So please make an official complaint, but be fair and treat the schools and SH as separate entities - we are all angry our money has been taken, but in some cases the schools have done their best - in some have simply been incompetent, and in others obstructive. Remove the emotion from your official complaints and point out what could have been done better so the MOE has grounds to intervene...

I would very much appreciate it if you have time for a quick informal meeting so I can understand the position of the MOE, and how to best advise other parents - I see you are based just around the corner in Normanby RD - I am flexible time wise so the sooner the better if you can please as the anger of many parents as we reach out to more around the country is growing - and of course it would be best if this is not taken out on hard working and already busy school staff.

Thanks,

9(2)(a)

Email 5

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, 3 July 2020 10:19 AM
To: Enquiries National <enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>
Cc: nikki.kaye@parliament.govt.nz; c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz
Subject: FW: Response to your emails dated 16 May and 1 June 2020

Thank you for your reply to my emails.

I note in the MoEd guidelines to schools is the following:

Is the travel company TAANZ (Travel Agents Association New Zealand) or IATA (International Air Transport Association) bonded?

This will provide financial protection if the company collapses.

Can you please tell me why MoEd partnered with Student Horizons – who is not licensed or bonded - in 2017 to provide an overseas tour for school students?

The below taken from Student Horizons website:

*In early October, a group of ten students from three New Zealand secondary schools embarked on a journey to Europe to attend the centenary commemorations of the Battle of Passchendaele in Ypres, Belgium. The students travelled through France, Belgium and the Netherlands to learn more about battles where pivotal Allied victories were won, and to pay homage at the final resting places of Commonwealth soldiers. The ten students, **travelling as guests of the Ministry of Education**, were honoured to attend the official ceremonies commemorating New Zealand's 'darkest day' at Tyne Cot Cemetery on 12th October.*

This was the same year the Ministry of Education received a submission outlining the concerns with schools not using bonded or TAANZ travel agents.

I am just one of hundreds of parents of high school students who are thousands of dollars out of pocket due the business model operated by Student Horizons.

If you have not followed your own guidelines then how can we expect schools to do so?

Thanks

9(2)(a)

From: Enquiries National <enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>
Date: 11 June 2020 at 4:31:04 PM NZST
To: 9(2)(a)
Subject: Response to your emails dated 16 May and 1 June 2020

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Please find attached the response to your emails dated 16 May and 1 June 2020.

Thanks

Enquiries National Team | Ministry of Education ^MC
33 Bowen Street, Wellington
education.govt.nz | Follow us on Twitter: @educationgovtnz



11 June 2020

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

The Minister of Education, Hon Chris Hipkins, has asked me to reply to your emails of 16 May and 1 June 2020 about your child's planned overseas school trip which has been cancelled due to COVID-19. I appreciate this is a challenging time for your family, and acknowledge this is a difficult situation.

Unfortunately as you may know, many travel insurance policies have become void due to pandemic exclusion grounds. While I note your suggestion for the Ministry of Education to have more oversight when schools engage in travel insurance arrangements, it is important to acknowledge that the Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICNZ) is responsible for setting system-wide regulations for insurance. You are welcome to send your suggestions for improvement to ICNZ directly. You can find more information at icnz.org.nz/.

All agreements about overseas school trips are made between the school Board of Trustees and the third party, including travel insurance providers. The decision for the trip to be cancelled, and the consequences of cancellation, rests with the school Board and is not something Ministry officials can intervene in.

The Ministry provides schools with guidelines to organise international travel for students, including requirements for insurance cover. You can read these at education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Supporting-students/Student-Wellbeing/OrganisingInternationalGroupVisit.pdf.

I understand the Board is following up appropriately with Student Horizons and has refunded monies to parents that it had retained as a contingency fund. I encourage you to continue to work with the school as they are best placed to advise you on whether a resolution can be reached that works for all parties.

If you are unhappy with the resolution, you may be interested to know that the Disputes Tribunal of New Zealand has the ability to settle small claims up to \$30,000. Decisions made by the Tribunal are legally-binding, and you can read more about the process at disputestribunal.govt.nz/.

While I acknowledge this may not be the answer you hoped for, I trust this information clarifies matters for you. Thank you again for writing, and I wish your family all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hurst
Associate Deputy Secretary Operational Delivery
Sector Enablement and Support

Email 6

Jeremy Barnes

From: Enquiries National
Sent: Friday, 3 July 2020 11:14 AM
To: SE&S Ministerial Team
Subject: FW: School Endorsed Educational Travel Provider - Student Horizons

Hi

Another complaint about Horizons.

Thanks

Enquiries National Team | Ministry of Education ^MC

33 Bowen Street, Wellington

education.govt.nz | [Follow us on Twitter: @educationgovtnz](https://twitter.com/educationgovtnz)

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, 3 July 2020 10:48 AM
To: Enquiries National <enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>
Cc: c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz; 9(2)(a)
Subject: School Endorsed Educational Travel Provider - Student Horizons

3 July 2020

Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140
Email: enquiries.national@education.govt.nz

To Whom It May Concern

RE: School Endorsed Educational Travel Provider - Student Horizons

We are writing to you in relation to overseas trips that have been booked through numerous secondary schools including ours using the travel provider "Student Horizons".

This letter serves to point out the facts initially, and then to look for a resolution for the significant number of families that have been impacted both financially and who are now questioning the integrity and trust they have put in the hands of top educational leaders in New Zealand.

Facts:

- Student Horizons have been contracted and endorsed by our school and Board of Trustees, and many more across the country to provide short overseas travel experiences.
- There have been more than 30 trips across New Zealand affected, impacting approximately 600 families, and involving millions of dollars in deposits paid to Student Horizons. Much of this money has not been recovered and Student Horizons has not been transparent as to where this money has gone despite our Board of Trustees attempting to seek clarity. It is more than likely most of the money paid will not be recovered.
- Guidelines from the Ministry of Education to Schools indicate that when planning short international educational trips a bonded Travel Agent should be used and appropriate insurance taken out. This

document is attached. Parents put their trust and faith in schools and their Board of Trustees who have not followed these guidelines resulting in an undesirable outcome.

- We have lodged a formal complaint to our Board of Trustees - as attached.
- Boards of Trustees and Principals have the contract with Student Horizons (we are awaiting a copy of these documents from our school) and parents have contracts with their respective schools. Parents have the right to pursue monies lost through the small claims court. If parents should take this action, schools financially would come under significant stress which would be locally, nationally and communally negatively impacting.
- Boards of Trustees and their Principals are aware that they are in a vulnerable position. It is unlikely with this in mind that they are now acting on behalf of the affected parents and their students as the realisation sinks in that the travel agent (that appears to be unethical) is unbonded. They would put themselves at risk in the event that they were transparent with the affected parents and students on the trip. Consequently across the nation parents and students are having mixed experiences as they negotiate with their respective schools.
- Student Horizons is advertising that they are a "Gold Sponsor" of the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ). When SPANZ was contacted they advised that they had initially entered a partnership with Student Horizons however had agreed to cancel the partnership due to Covid 19. They were requesting Student Horizon take their blog down. We question this relationship which suggests a complete conflict of interest. Why is SPANZ floating the idea of supporting a travel agent that does not meet the Ministry of Education Guidelines?
<https://www.student-horizons.com/blog/student-horizons-partners-with-spanz/?fbclid=IwAR0-LFoAb0OnisKmXEB-zTi0qdVV5xMjxlA00k6vlyMab6nvGU-OruddwVE>
- Student Horizons is a major sponsor of the ABSNZ Association of Boys Schools in New Zealand. Consequently they have received a letter of endorsement (attached) despite being non bonded and owing across New Zealand millions in refunds that they have absorbed. More disturbing is that in some instances these boys schools appear to have received overly generous donations from Student Horizons which has blurred their response to affected parents awaiting refunds. Westlake Boys is one example where thousands of dollars was paid by Student Horizons for their changing rooms. Interestingly this Principal is the chairperson for the ANSNZ.
- There have been complaints laid to the Commerce Commission by parents on an individual basis across the country. Several parents from our school have complaints. Again, this is because Student Horizons have not been transparent and have openly admitted to using money to fund operations of their business on the back of the pandemic. We are now encouraging our schools to lay a complaint to the Commerce Commission and act on behalf of the parents to get the company investigated as more and more information is received that indicates unethical business practice.
- Schools from Australia have also experienced unethical behaviour by Student Horizons and are pursuing action via their own legal channels.
- Between New Zealand and Australia the company Student Horizons has taken more than 60 trips, over \$6,000,000 most of which is unaccounted for.

Resolution Sought

Based on the above information, for the betterment of educational outside the classroom trips involving international travel which is so beneficial for student learning outcomes, we would like to see the following:

1. **Only bonded travel agents to be used by schools going forward.** All Boards of Trustees and School Principals need to be made aware. The trips are extremely beneficial to learning and provide many opportunities to students who may not otherwise have means. We acknowledge those educationalists who go above and beyond to provide these opportunities. However, hundreds

of families and thousands of dollars has been misappropriated in this instance. All of this could have been avoided if the guidelines had been followed. It needs to be more than a guideline.

2. **Affected schools to be supported financially in this instance to compensate impacted families.** Parents, schools and Boards of Trustees have been influenced by those in positions of trust who have endorsed a travel agency that was in fact non-bonded despite the Ministry of Education guidelines. There needs to be an independent inquiry undertaken to expose what would appear to be unhealthy relationships of people in the education sector in positions of trust and influence.

3. **We would like to see the Ministry of Education support affected schools by bringing to the attention to the Commerce Commission the activities of Student Horizons.** We have reason to believe that this company has breached the trust of many and is actually behaving unethically and illegally. They have absorbed and misappropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars. They have not acted with integrity and in our opinion with what we know there is a prima facie case of fraud. The wide reaching impact of the companies actions, the significant loss experienced by students and their families, as well as a level of independence from schools supports the notion that a Commerce Commission and/or Serious Fraud Office inquiry is necessary to ensure a fair outcome for all parties.

We look forward to your response. We do intend to further investigations. To ensure a fair outcome we do seek the support of the Ministry of Education and would like a contact that is willing to work with us to reach a resolution that is suitable.

Yours faithfully,

9(2)(a)

CC:

Minister of Education Chris Hipkins c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz

SPANZ - Secondary Principals Association of NZ 9(2)(a)

ABSNZ Association of Boys Schools NZ c/ 9(2)(a)

TAANZ Andrew Olsen info@taanz 9(2)(a)

Email 7

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)

Sent: Friday, 3 July 2020 9:39 AM

To: Enquiries National <enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>

Cc: c.hipkins@minister.govt.nz; nikki.kaye@parliament.govt.nz; 9(2)(a)

Subject: Palmerston North Girls' High School parent group and Student Horizons

To whom it may concern

We are writing to you in relation to overseas trips that have been booked through numerous secondary schools including ours using the travel provider "Student Horizons".

The attached letter, and accompanying attached documents, serve to point out the facts initially, and then to look for a resolution for the significant number of families that have been impacted both financially and who are now questioning the integrity and trust they have put in the hands of top educational leaders in New Zealand. We thank you for your attention to this.

Kind regards

9(2)(a)

Email 7 attachment 1

9(2)(a)



3 July 2020

Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140
Email: enquiries.national@education.govt.nz

To Whom It May Concern

RE: School Endorsed Educational Travel Provider - Student Horizons

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Facts:

- Student Horizons have been contracted and endorsed by our school and Board of Trustees, and many more across the country to provide short overseas travel experiences.
- There have been more than 30 trips across New Zealand affected, impacting approximately 600 families, and involving millions of dollars in deposits paid to Student Horizons. Much of this money has not been recovered and Student Horizons has not been transparent as to where this money has gone despite our Board of Trustees attempting to seek clarity. It is more than likely most of the money paid will not be recovered.
- Guidelines from the Ministry of Education to Schools indicate that when planning short international educational trips a bonded Travel Agent should be used and appropriate insurance taken out. This document is attached. Parents put their trust and faith in schools and their Board of Trustees who have not followed these guidelines resulting in an undesirable outcome.
- We have lodged a formal complaint to our Board of Trustees - as attached.
- Boards of Trustees and Principals have the contract with Student Horizons (we are awaiting a copy of these documents from our school) and parents have contracts with their respective schools. Parents have the right to pursue monies lost through the small claims court. If parents should take this action, schools financially would come under significant stress which would be locally, nationally and communally negatively impacting.
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their students as the realisation sinks in that the travel agent (that appears to be unethical) is unbonded. They would put themselves at risk in the event that they were transparent with the affected parents and students on the trip. Consequently across the nation parents and students are having mixed experiences as they negotiate with their respective schools.

- Student Horizons is advertising that they are a “Gold Sponsor” of the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ). When SPANZ was contacted they advised that they had initially entered a partnership with Student Horizons however had agreed to cancel the partnership due to Covid 19. They were requesting Student Horizon take their blog down. We question this relationship which suggests a complete conflict of interest. Why is SPANZ floating the idea of supporting a travel agent that does not meet the Ministry of Education Guidelines? <https://www.student-horizons.com/blog/student-horizons-partners-with-spanz/?fbclid=IwAR0-LFoAb0OnisKmXEB-zTi0qdVV5xMjxlA00k6vlyMab6nvgU-OruddwVE>
- Student Horizons is a major sponsor of the ABSNZ Association of Boys Schools in New Zealand. Consequently they have received a letter of endorsement (attached) despite being non bonded and owing across New Zealand millions in refunds that they have absorbed. More disturbing is that in some instances these boys’ schools appear to have received overly generous donations from Student Horizons which has blurred their response to affected parents awaiting refunds. Westlake Boys is one example where thousands of dollars was paid by Student Horizons for their changing rooms. Interestingly this Principal is the chairperson for the ABSNZ.
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- Between New Zealand and Australia the company Student Horizons has taken more than 60 trips, over \$6,000,000 most of which is unaccounted for.

Resolution Sought

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2. **Affected schools to be supported financially in this instance to compensate impacted families.** Parents, schools and Boards of Trustees have been influenced by those in positions of trust who have endorsed a travel agency that was in fact non-bonded despite the Ministry of Education guidelines. There needs to be an independent inquiry undertaken to expose what would appear to be unhealthy relationships of people in the education sector in positions of trust and influence.
3. **We would like to see the Ministry of Education support affected schools by bringing to the attention to the Commerce Commission the activities of Student Horizons.** We have reason to believe that this company has breached the trust of many and is behaving unethically and illegally. They have absorbed and misappropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars. They have not acted with integrity and in our opinion with what we know there is a prima facie case of fraud. The wide-reaching impact of the company's actions, the significant loss experienced by students and their families, as well as a level of independence from schools, supports the notion that a Commerce Commission and/or Serious Fraud Office inquiry is necessary to ensure a fair outcome for all parties.

We look forward to your response. We do intend to further investigations. To ensure a fair outcome we do seek the support of the Ministry of Education and would like a contact that is willing to work with us to reach a resolution that is suitable.

Yours faithfully,

9(2)(a)



Enclosed:

MoE Guidelines

Letter of Endorsement from ABSNZ

Letter to Palmerston North Girls' High School Board of Trustees

Link: SPANZ Sponsorship Link <https://www.student-horizons.com/blog/student-horizons-partners-with-spanz/?fbclid=IwAR0-LFoAb0OnisKmXEB-zTi0qdVV5xMjxlA00k6vlyMab6nvgU-OruddwVE>

CC:

Minister of Education Chris Hipkins c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz

Hon Nikki Kaye, MP Auckland Central, Deputy Leader National Party nikki.kaye@parliament.govt.nz

SPANZ - Secondary Principals Association of NZ 9(2)(a)

ABSNZ Association of Boys Schools NZ c/- 9(2)(a)

TAANZ Andrew Olsen 9(2)(a)

Email 7 attachment 2

3 July 2020

Board of Trustees
Palmerston North Girls' High School
238 Fitzherbert Avenue
West End
Palmerston North 4410
Email: Chairperson@pnghs.school.nz

Dear Members of the PNGHS Board of Trustees

Re: Schools obligation to use a bonded Travel Agent and appropriate insurance when organising an educational overseas trip.

We wish to formalise a complaint against the Board of Trustees in relation to the service provider that was selected and endorsed to provide our students with an education outside the classroom trip to the USA and Europe (2020 PNGHS Arts Tour).

The Ministry of Education guidelines attached for your referral clearly state that a bonded travel agent and appropriate insurance is recommended.

Student Horizon's is not a bonded travel agent. The insurance cover that they recommended and was organised on our behalf was inadequate.

We surmise that on both accounts despite these clear guidelines the school has not acted with due diligence in the interests of the parents and students.

We would also like to bring to your attention that our parent group is furthering investigations and all indications are that this company is behaving both unethically and unlawfully. It is unlikely that Student Horizons will provide a fair and reasonable refund in the event that they cannot provide the service. We believe that this company no longer has the financial stability to uphold any contract we may have with them.

Private investigations led by a parent group collective across a range of schools indicates that our school and students have consequently been put at a risk. This may have all been avoided had the services of a bonded travel agent been used.

We ask that in order to act in the interest of the parents who are most likely to lose financially:

1. Firstly that the Board of Trustees and school lay a complaint via the Commerce Commission as soon as possible.
2. Provide a copy to each member of our parent group the contract between the school and Student Horizon's for transparency purposes.

Please note that we firmly support overseas travel to enrich student learning. The benefits of purposeful educational school trips are extremely beneficial. The purpose of this formalised complaint is to guide you going forward, ensure that Student Horizons are held to account, provide the Ministry of Education with information that they need to know and ensure that the school is taking the appropriate pathway to ensure that a fair outcome is reached.

Yours faithfully

9(2)(a)



Enclosed: Ministry of Education Guidelines document

CC:

Minister of Education Chris Hipkins c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz

SPANZ - Secondary Principals Association of NZ 9(2)(a)

Hon Nikki Kaye, MP Auckland Central, Deputy Leader National Party

nikki.kaye@parliament.govt.nz

Planning a Short-Term International Student Visit

Things to consider

Guidance documents

Refer to the following for good practice guidelines and examples:

- Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code):
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Code-of-Practice-NZQA.pdf>
- The Ministry of Education's Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) guidance:
<http://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home> and <http://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/EOTC-Guidelines/Tool-Kit>
- The Ministry of Education's Hosting Short-Term International Visitors Guidelines for Schools:
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/InternationalStudentVisitors.aspx>

Initial planning

Have you read and understood the school's policy and procedures on school trips?

Cover yourself by following the procedures laid down by the school and, if the school is a Code Signatory, the requirements of the Code. If the trip is independent of the school, any student absences should be agreed in advance and the correct permissions notified and recorded.

Note: if the visit is for longer than two weeks, the school must be a Code Signatory

Are you aware of your legal and moral responsibility as party leader?

Make sure you know what your obligations are when acting in place of parents.

Have you visited the destination/resort before?

If not, ask about inspection visits or contact someone who has been to the location.

Is the travel company TAANZ (Travel Agents Association New Zealand) or IATA (International Air Transport Association) bonded?

This will provide financial protection if the company collapses.

Are there any likely Health and Safety risks related to activities or accommodation?

As part of your risk assessment you need to be aware of these and take appropriate action – see EOTC guidelines.

What does the cost of the trip include and exclude?

For example, ski trip prices often only cover the cost of two-hour morning lessons; afternoon lessons are extra.

Is the trip suitable for all students?

Take account of age, gender and special-needs issues.

Which staff or other adults will be accompanying you?

Makes sure there is an appropriate balance in terms of gender, experience, etc. Is there someone with a first aid certificate? See EOTC Guidance chapter 4.

What are the insurance arrangements, and are they sufficient?

International students (including group students) should have appropriate and current medical and travel insurance while in New Zealand. Check this out, bearing in mind the activities to be undertaken. See information on insurance for more detail on minimum requirements.

What is the payment schedule?

Provide a trip-payments record card for each student, and keep a computerised record of payments in and out.

Are there any passport/visa implications?

There may be students whose nationality status may affect their ability to travel abroad. Inbound students who are in New Zealand holding a Visitor Visa can go to *any* school for up to two weeks as long as the school is not receiving money for the visit. They don't have to pay any [school] fees, and they are not entered on ENROL because they are just visiting. The school must keep a separate record of their details

Implementing the plan

Write to parents including the following information:

- Details of staff/adults accompanying the trip
- Payment schedule and amounts, including a clear indication that deposits are non-returnable
- Details of what is, and what is not, covered by the cost
- Advice on appropriate clothing and pocket money
- The itinerary, including departure and arrival details
- Accommodation details
- A clear identification of possible risks
- A clear statement concerning discipline and appropriate sanctions
- Details of travel arrangements, including any en route accommodation
- Date of any parents' information evening
- Emergency contact name and number both at home and away
- A form of consent requesting special medical and diet information, and permission to take appropriate emergency measures, plus home contact numbers
- Request for nationality and passport details
- Medical and travel insurance requirements

Have regular team meetings and ensure all staff are consulted about arrangements

Team work and leadership are vital ingredients for a successful trip.

Regularly update your risk assessment relating to individual students' needs

Meet with relevant staff and parents if you are concerned about an individual student's needs. For example, an additional member of staff might be needed to assist with a student who is disabled or has particular behavioural difficulties.

During the trip

- Regularly do a headcount of students, particularly when getting on and off transport
- Always get another member of staff to check
- Ensure reasonable supervision at all times. Allocate groups of students to individual staff members; this helps rapid communication of information
- Ensure students understand and apply travel safety requirements, eg using seat belts on coaches
- Create positive relationships with coach drivers, hotel managers, tour reps and, above all, teachers from other schools!
- Always keep students informed of reasons for delays or sudden changes of plan. This will keep most students quiet for a period of time
- On arrival at the accommodation update your risk assessment. Consider a fire practice, and check entries and exits to rooms
- Take care when allocating students to rooms. There needs to be a balance between students' preferences and the need to ensure good order and safety

- Take similar care in allocating staff members
- Advise students to take care of their belongings and offer to lock valuables in staff rooms or in the hotel safe
- Make sure rooms are checked for pre-existing damage and report it to the accommodation manager
- Arrange a meeting with students to reinforce the code of conduct, identify out-of-bounds areas, map out the programme for the week and agree on bedtimes
- Let the tour reps or hotel managers know of any concerns you may have, particularly if you think they compromise student safety
- Do not change the planned programme, or accept enforced changes, without good reason
- Consider the insurance implications of any change your liability as a party leader
- Before setting off for home from abroad ensure students are aware of Customs and Bio-security requirements, and the penalties that underpin them
- On the way home ensure that, in the last stages of the journey, students can contact home to provide an expected time of arrival
- On arrival, staff must stay with students until they are collected
- Contact the parents if they are late
- If you are unsure how to deal with a problem on the trip, consult your team and don't be too proud to contact your school for advice. A school should ideally provide a mobile phone so that you can make contact in the event of an emergency.

Insurance

Insurance should, at a minimum, cover the following aspects:

Health cover while in New Zealand

- medical expenses incurred for the treatment of illness and/or injury (in excess of New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) cover) that requires surgery and/or hospitalisation – unlimited sum insured
- medical evacuation related to serious illness and injuries – unlimited sum insured
- emergency dental treatment
- costs for family members' travel in the event that the student suffers a serious illness or injury.

Repatriation, search and rescue

- repatriation and expatriation in the event a student has to return home following an injury or illness which interrupts their study plans
- return of mortal remains/funeral expenses - including travel costs for family members, repatriation of remains and funeral costs, search-and-rescue operation costs incurred to locate the insured.

Travel into and out of New Zealand

- missed flights or delays for travel into and out of New Zealand
- medical expenses incurred for the treatment of an illness and injury incurred during the travel.

Personal liability

- negligence causing bodily injury (including death) of another person or loss of or damage to property
- false arrest and wrongful detention.

Ratios

see EOTC guidelines, Chapter 4

A ratio compares the number of skilled and experienced supervisors to the number of students or participants involved in an event. Ratios will vary according to the age and needs of students, the nature of the activity, the location, the competence of the students and the staff involved.

Ratios for overseas trips, remote environments or hazardous activities should match the increased level of risk involved.

Temporary accommodation

Trip organisers must take a robust approach to determine that temporary accommodation and accompanying supervision are suitable, including, but not limited to:

- Assessment of the suitability
- Ensuring that students under 18 have appropriate supervision
- Ensuring the group students have an appropriate ratio of supervisors
- Monitoring and managing any risks to the safety of students.

For further information on hosting fee-paying international students please go to:

- <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation.aspx>
- <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/code-of-practice-for-the-pastoral-care-of-international-students/>

For further information on organising regular group exchanges please visit:

- <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/StudentExchangeApprovals.aspx>

For further information about how to conduct a risk assessment – these will need to be adapted for the NZ environment, but provide a good introduction:

- *Demystifying Risk Assessment* <http://www.schooltravelforum.com/white-papers-guides>

Disclaimer

These guidance notes have been compiled for your information only and should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject. Nor should they be considered as a substitute for legal or professional service. The information is provided on the basis that you are responsible for making your own assessment of the topics discussed.

The Ministry expressly disclaims all liability (including but not limited to liability for negligence) for errors or omissions of any kind whatsoever or for any loss (including direct and indirect losses), damages or other consequences which may arise from your reliance on the material contained in the guidance notes.



Statement from ABSNZ Executive Committee on Student Horizons

The Association of Boys' Schools of New Zealand (ABSNZ) have enjoyed a nine year relationship with Student Horizons. During that time many of our member schools have participated in overseas tours with them. Student Horizons have developed a strong reputation within our network for doing the right thing by the schools they work with and providing life-changing experiences for our students.

Jamie Wansey is a strong supporter of the ABSNZ network and a passionate supporter of young people here in New Zealand. The establishment of the Foundation of Student Horizons charitable trust which provides financial support for disadvantaged youth, is one noteworthy testament to his character. He is well respected within our member community.

We hope that Jamie and his team continue to succeed in future as they adjust to the challenges of the current business environment.

8 May 2020

Email 8

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Monday, 6 July 2020 5:47 AM
To: School Support
Cc: 9(2)(a)
Subject: Fwd: My edit - here you go 9(2)(a)
Attachments: Facts for MoE.docx; ABSNZ-Student-Horizons-Endorsement.pdf; EGG5 BOT Formal Complaint.docx; 106688019_626292774901285_6143572611613059170_n.png

Categories: Emily to respond

Thank you Emily for your time. Further to our conversation

I have attached a word document outlining facts as we know them complete with links and supporting documents.

We look forward to you assisting us to reach a solution.

9(2)(a)



Email 8 attachment 1

Timeline of information gathered:

- Guidelines from the Ministry of Education to Schools indicate that when planning short international educational trips a bonded Travel Agent should be used and appropriate insurance taken out. This document is attached. Parents put their trust and faith in schools and their Board of Trustees who have not followed these guidelines resulting in an undesirable outcome.

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Supporting-students/Student-Wellbeing/OrganisingInternationalGroupVisit.pdf>

- In 2017 A submission was lodged from TAANZ to the MOE outlining the risks associated with organised school trips and where schools were using unbonded travel agents. The information received was that the submission was dismissed. I have asked for a copy and would like a copy of the response as well. I am familiar with the content however am looking for the hard copies.
- In 2017 the MoE also ran a competition of sorts which saw 10 lucky students awarded travel with two chaperones from the MoE. Student Horizons an unbonded travel agent was the trip organiser. Most of us are left stunned that that the Ministry of Education failed to follow their own guidelines.

<https://student-horizons.com/blog/winning-students-embark-on-the-trip-of-a-lifetime-in-belgium/?fbclid=IwAR2RYrSABK2m4ylz1q-ugccV7OyKgxDOmhdDIgyDogGzBFCLwrXwzfUIQg>

- Student Horizons have been contracted and endorsed by our school and Board of Trustees, and many more across the country to provide short overseas travel experiences. Parents have become increasingly frustrated that there is a lack of transparency by the company and often the schools to account for the deposits paid and now lost post Covid 19.
- There have been more than 30 trips across New Zealand affected, impacting approximately 600 families, and involving millions of dollars in deposits paid to Student Horizons. Much of this money has not been recovered post Covid 19 and Student Horizons has not been transparent as to where this money has gone despite our Board of Trustees attempting to seek clarity. It is more than likely most of the money paid will not be recovered.
- Schools affected from the information I received includes Epsom Girls Grammar, Fielding High School, Mount Roskill Grammar, Mt Albert Grammar, Mcleans College, Waikato Diocesan (fully insured so fully refunded), Palmerston North Girls High School, Westlake Boys, Tawa College, Rangitoto College, Auckland Grammar School, St Peters Cambridge, Kings High School, St Andrews, Rutherford, Awatapu College, Long Bay College, Rongotai. Many of these schools had more than one trip organised and affected.

- We will be lodging a formal complaint to our Board of Trustees - as attached. Some parents are considering, due to the amount of unrecovered funds, that the disputes tribunal is an excellent option and logical next step. Depending on the outcome of these folks, more may follow. We are confident that with the information we have success would be most likely. The contract is with the schools and respective BoT's and upon the advice of the Ministry of Education themselves, this really appears to be the only way forward if funds are to be recovered.
- Boards of Trustees and Principals have the contract with Student Horizons (we are awaiting a copy of these documents from our school, Epsom Girls Grammar, and additional information around the insurance documents as requested) and parents have contracts with their respective schools. Parents have the right to pursue monies lost through the small claims court. If parents should take this action, schools financially would come under significant stress which would be locally, nationally and communally negatively impacting.
- Boards of Trustees and their Principals are aware that they are in a vulnerable position. It is unlikely with this in mind that they are now acting on behalf of the affected parents and their students as the realisation sinks in that the travel agent (that appears to be unethical) is unbonded. They would put themselves at risk in the event that they were transparent with the affected parents and students on the trip. Consequently, across the nation parents and students are having mixed experiences as they negotiate with their respective schools. Some parents have begun to lodge formal complaints (Fielding and Palmerston North parent groups may have lodged this already) with more to follow.
- Student Horizons is advertising that they are a "Gold Sponsor" of the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ). When SPANZ was contacted they advised that they had initially entered a partnership with Student Horizons however had agreed to cancel the partnership due to Covid 19. They were requesting Student Horizon take their blog down. We question this relationship which suggests a conflict of interest. Why is SPANZ floating the idea of supporting a travel agent that does not meet the Ministry of Education Guidelines? The fee schedule indicates this would come at a cost of \$20,000 and we have a copy of what Student Horizons would have received under normal circumstances. <https://www.student-horizons.com/blog/student-horizons-partners-with-spanz/?fbclid=IwAR0-LFoAb0OnisKmXEB-zTi0qdVV5xMjxlA00k6vlyMab6nvgU-OruddwVE>
- Student Horizons is a major sponsor of the ABSNZ Association of Boys Schools in New Zealand. Consequently, they have received a letter of endorsement (attached) despite being non bonded and owing across New Zealand millions in refunds that they have absorbed. More disturbing is that in some instances these boys' schools appear to have received overly generous donations from Student Horizons which has blurred their response to affected parents awaiting refunds.

- Westlake Boys is one example where thousands of dollars was paid by Student Horizons for some changing rooms. Westlake returned an incorrect OIA request and failed to disclose this until Jamie Wansey admitted the donation. Westlake was then challenged, and then it was “remembered,” by David Fergusson. Interestingly this Principal is the chairperson for the ABSNZ.
- There have been complaints laid to the Commerce Commission by parents on an individual basis across the country. Several parents from our school have laid complaints. Again, this is because Student Horizons have not been transparent and have openly admitted to using money to fund operations of their business and for purposes unintended using the pandemic as a reason. Basically, parents have lost money not because Student Horizons were not refunded, but because they were using much of the money to fund operational expenses. We are now encouraging our schools to lay a complaint to the Commerce Commission and act on behalf of the parents to get the company investigated as more and more information is received that indicates unethical business practice.
- Schools from Australia have also experienced unethical behaviour by Student Horizons and are pursuing action via their own legal channels.
- Between New Zealand and Australia the company Student Horizons has failed to deliver on more than 60 trip contracts and taken over \$6,000,000 most of which is unaccounted for.

We are now also investigating situations where there is a possibility that some schools have used trip fees to fundraise by adding on additional fees which then the schools retain. This is something that we will continue to explore and should we find anything evidential we will be handing it on to the MOE, our parent group and other relevant authorities. We intend to suggest to parents to request school account information showing money in and money out in detail. Of particular note is Fielding School. I am aware of their 2018 accounts which are online, link below. I note against travel that there appears to be a profit of \$30,000. This raises questions that I feel need exploring. (Page 12 of the document).

https://feildinghigh.ibcdn.nz/media/2019_10_12_2018_final_accounts.pdf

Resolution Sought

Based on the above information, we would like to see the following:

1. **Only bonded travel agents to be used by schools going forward.** The overseas trips can be extremely beneficial to learning and provide many opportunities to students who may not otherwise have means. We acknowledge those educationalists who go above and beyond to provide these opportunities. However, hundreds of families and thousands of dollars has been misappropriated and/ or wasted in this instance. All of this could have been avoided if the guidelines had been followed. It needs to be more than a guideline. Monies paid by parents need to be accounted for by schools. Schools should not be hiding any additional agenda in fees paid to them.

2. **Affected schools to be supported financially in this instance to compensate impacted families.** Parents, schools and Boards of Trustees have been influenced by those in positions of trust who have endorsed a travel agency that was in fact non-bonded despite the Ministry of Education guidelines. There needs to be an independent inquiry undertaken to expose what would appear to be the unhealthy relationships of people in the education sector in positions of trust and influence with Student Horizons and Jamie Wansey, including any relationship or endorsements by the MOE counter to it's own guidelines.
3. **We would like to see the Ministry of Education support affected schools by bringing to the attention of the Commerce Commission the activities of Student Horizons.** We have reason to believe that this company has breached the trust of many and is actually behaving unethically and illegally. They have absorbed and misappropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars. They have not acted with integrity and in our opinion with what we know there is a prima facie case of fraud. The wide-reaching impact of the company's actions, the significant loss experienced by students and their families, as well as opaque relationships with some schools, supports the notion that a Commerce Commission and/or Serious Fraud Office inquiry is necessary to ensure a fair outcome for all parties.

Thank you,

9(2)(a)





Statement from ABSNZ Executive Committee on Student Horizons

The Association of Boys' Schools of New Zealand (ABSNZ) have enjoyed a nine year relationship with Student Horizons. During that time many of our member schools have participated in overseas tours with them. Student Horizons have developed a strong reputation within our network for doing the right thing by the schools they work with and providing life-changing experiences for our students.

Jamie Wansey is a strong supporter of the ABSNZ network and a passionate supporter of young people here in New Zealand. The establishment of the Foundation of Student Horizons charitable trust which provides financial support for disadvantaged youth, is one noteworthy testament to his character. He is well respected within our member community.

We hope that Jamie and his team continue to succeed in future as they adjust to the challenges of the current business environment.

8 May 2020

Email 8 attachment 3

29th June 2020

Board of Trustees
Epsom Girls Grammar
Silver Road
Epsom
Auckland 1023

Attention: Chris Iles

Dear Chris,

Re: Schools obligation to use a bonded Travel Agent and appropriate insurance when organising an educational overseas trip.

We wish to make a formal complaint relating to the decisions of the Board of Trustees in relation to the service provider that was selected and endorsed to provide our students with two education outside the classroom trips to Europe.

The Ministry of Education guidelines attached for your referral clearly state that a bonded travel agent and appropriate insurance is recommended.

Student Horizons is not a bonded travel agent. The insurance cover that they recommended and was organised on our behalf was inadequate.

On both accounts these clear guidelines from the MOE were not followed, therefore the school has not acted with due diligence in the interests of the parents and students.

We would also like to bring to your attention that our parent group is furthering investigations and all indications are that this company is behaving both unethically and unlawfully. It is unlikely that Student Horizons will provide a fair and reasonable refund in the event that they cannot provide the service. We believe that this company no longer has the financial stability to uphold any contract we may have with them.

We also bring to your attention that our contract with the school has been frustrated, and we have the option to pursue legal recourse to obtain a full refund minus service fees, which generally fall between 10-15 percent of the total amount paid. If this is pursued it will be collectively, and to recoup our money from all schools involved across New Zealand.

While acknowledging the financial stress on our whole society, including school budgets, we feel this "last recourse" option would be in the best interests of future parents who may decide to open the minds of their children with educational travel, without fear of financial loss - should appropriate action not be taken to ensure this does not happen again.

Our investigations indicate that our school and students have been put at a risk. This may all have been avoided had the services of a bonded travel agent been used.

We ask that in order to act in the interests of all parents -

1. Firstly that the Board of Trustees and school lay a complaint via the Commerce Commission as soon as possible.
2. Provide a copy to each member of our parent group the contract documents between the school and Student Horizons for transparency purposes.
3. Request legal advice from the MOE regarding the frustration of the contract with Student Horizons.

Please note that we firmly support overseas travel to enrich student learning. Purposeful educational school trips are extremely beneficial to students. The purpose of this formalised complaint is to guide all schools going forward, and ensure that Student Horizons are held to account, provide the Ministry of Education with information that they need to know, and ensure that every school is taking the appropriate pathway to ensure that a fair outcome is reached.

Yours faithfully,

9(2)(a)



Enclosed: Ministry of Education Guidelines document

CC: Minister of Education Chris Hipkins c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz
SPANZ - Secondary Principals Association of NZ 9(2)(a)

Association of Boys Schools NZ c/- 9(2)(a)

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

SPANZ BUSINESS PARTNER ENTITLEMENTS

	PLATINUM \$40,000 +GST	GOLD \$20,000 +GST	SILVER \$10,000 +GST
Product Exclusivity	Yes	Yes	-
Website Advertising: Logo & link to your website	Yes	Yes	Yes
President's Comment: Logo advertising	Yes	Yes	Yes
President's Comment: Two ½ page adverts during year	Yes	-	-
SPANZ PRINCIPALS' CONFERENCE			
Exhibition Stand	Double stand* (choice of location)	Double stand*	Single stand
Exhibitor Entries	6 exhibitor entries (includes meals as listed at registration)	4 exhibitor entries (includes meals as listed at registration)	3 exhibitor entries (includes meals as listed at registration)
Speaking Availability	10 minutes prominent speaking time slot	8 minutes prominent speaking time slot	5 minutes prominent speaking time slot
Programme Advertising	Full page advert including Logo	Half page advert including Logo	Half page advert including Logo
Delegate Bag Inserts	Yes	Yes	Yes
Table Advertising	Yes	Yes	-
Delegates List	Sent 3 weeks prior to Conference	Sent 2½ weeks prior to Conference	Sent 2 weeks prior to Conference

Email 9

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Tuesday, 7 July 2020 7:29 AM
To: School Support
Subject: Re: Student Horizons and Student Travel

Thank you for acknowledging receipt. I realise that this could take a little bit of time to thoroughly explore.
Thank you

9(2)(a)

On Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 7:10 AM School Support <School.Support@education.govt.nz> wrote:

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Yes thanks, I can confirm we received your email. We will endeavour to respond as soon as possible.

Ngā mihi,

Emily

Emily Button | Senior Adviser | School Support

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Monday, 6 July 2020 4:54 p.m.
To: School Support <School.Support@education.govt.nz>
Subject: Student Horizons and Student Travel

Hi Emily,

Just following up the email I sent through this morning.

Can you please confirm that you have received the email.

Thank you

9(2)(a)

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Email 10

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)

Sent: Friday, 10 July 2020 10:53 a.m.

To: 9(2)(a)

; c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz; 9(2)(a)

9(2)(a) Gareth.hollins@parliament.govt.nz

Cc: School Support

Subject: Update

Good morning everyone,

I felt it was timely to keep everyone in the loop as to what is occurring.

I am in contact with Emily Button at the Ministry of Education. She is receiving files relating to our concerns and is aware of the scope of the problem. I intend to ring her a week from now where she is going to advise me of what steps she intends to take and some form of timeline for those steps. Her contact email is school.support@education.govt.nz and she has advised that she would like to work with us and across departments to do that. She does appear supportive on the phone but in my experience you never know with these things.

Our Facebook page has had to be removed. Many parents on the page received a legal document requesting them to cease and desist. I have attached mine so you can see the situation for what it is. Here is the link to a newspaper article that was driven by schools in Manawatu outlining what has occurred. As an Administrator, myself and 9(2)(a) were both at risk according to lawyers as we became responsible for what others may have posted. That did not sit well. The parents who posted were usually factual and professional in their approach however as with anything, there's always one or two.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/travel/travel-troubles/300051688/travel-agency-sends-gagging-order-to-parents-fighting-for-refunds?cid=app-iPhone>

In saying that I have formed another group on Facebook to stay connected with other parents who are trying to make sense of which best is their pathway. This is the link

9(2)(a) in the event you wished to discuss anything. It is not an open forum to the public. It is not visible unless you are a member.

Some people are currently floating the idea of one person taking a school to task through the disputes tribunal. If successful that would open the door for another 599 families (thereabouts) in NZ to do the same thing. I would support the idea as a last resort but am hopeful it should not come to that.

So that is the essence of it all. I will continue to regularly update this group.

Thank you,

9(2)(a)

Email 11

Jeremy Barnes

From: Brent - Tour Time 9(2)(a)
Sent: Monday, 13 July 2020 5:32 PM
To: k.faafoi@ministers.govt.nz; c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz
Cc: k.davis@ministers.govt.nz; p.henare@ministers.govt.nz; Jim Greening; Enquiries National; School Support; nikki.kaye@parliament.govt.nz; Mark.Mitchell@parliament.govt.nz 9(2)(a)
Subject: SCHOOL GROUP TRAVEL/TOURING SECTOR
Attachments: Ministers_Letter_RE_SCHOOL_TRAVEL_MOE_13Jul2020.pdf; 01_Email_to_Minister_Parata_15March2017 - Copy.pdf; 02_FORMAL_MOE_Response_to_TAANZ_17May2017 - Copy.pdf; 03_Email_reply_to_MOE_Response_18May2017 - Copy.pdf; 04_Email_to_Minister_Kaye_12May2017 - Copy.pdf

Dear Minister Faafoi and Minister Hipkins,

Please refer to the attached letter and supporting information in regards to my concerns around the overseas School Group Travel industry.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours faithfully,

Brent Imrie
Director
TOUR TIME



9(2)(a)
web: www.tourtime.com
phone: +64 9 426 8037
9(2)(a)



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13 July 2020

Hon. Kris Faafoi
k.faafoi@ministers.govt.nz
Hon. Chris Hipkins
c.hipkins@ministers.govt.nz

Dear Minister Faafoi and Minister Hipkins,

SCHOOL GROUP TRAVEL/TOURING SECTOR

I am a director of Tour Time NZ Limited. We are a 100% family owned company that has been in business for 28 years in the tourism sector. We are also one of only two financially bonded and licensed specialist school group travel and touring companies in New Zealand.

As you may expect, the covid-19 pandemic has had implications for the school group travel industry.

I am writing to express my ongoing concerns around the industry as part of the travel sector in general. The sector in New Zealand is largely unregulated. This is even though tourism is our largest export earner.

Consumers being left high and dry

In particular, I am concerned about recent news reports about students, parents and high schools who have booked school group tours through non-financially bonded and licensed school tour operators. Recently, there have been a series of reports about one particular operator (**refer weblinks below**) and while, of course, those might not tell the complete story we are concerned about the impact on consumer confidence on the industry as a whole.

The reports say that customers only being offered refunds of up to 15% of their entire tour costs, to be paid in staggered payments over six months. They say they have been told that the money they have paid has already been expended on operational costs and staff wages. Minimal funds seem to have been held on deposit or paid to suppliers and airlines if the reports are to be believed.

There are also reports of affected families being told that they hope to trade out of this situation when a trans-Tasman bubble eventuates. While the government has relaxed its rules on this recently, it is highly corrosive to consumer confidence in the sector.

This will affect hundreds of struggling families. Furthermore, it seems that schools are being offered with credits rather than cash refunds. Conditions attached to these credits include that it must be used for a new long-haul travel booking.

Credits do not work for students who are in their final year, of course. Even then, any new booking will rely on the operator still being in trade. That is not a given in this environment.

Parents have already lodged complaints with various advocacy groups and enforcement agencies. They had also started a Facebook group to coordinate their actions though this seems to have been shut down in response to legal threats. There are, of course, various legal avenues for them to work through and it is important to note that we can only base our concerns on what has been reported in the media. Those reports, however, are having a corrosive effect on the industry itself.

These issues can be easily avoided

Our business is bonded through the Travel Agents' Association of New Zealand ("TAANZ"). This involves a higher standard of accountancy and auditing to ensure the protection of each client's tour specific funds. It is an option available to all reputable operators and we do not know why other firms are not availing themselves of it.

As a point of comparison, Tour Time has refunded all our 2020 travelling school groups in cash prior to 31 March 2020, as all client funds were financially protected and held in a customer specific TAANZ bonded bank account.

The refunds we were able to pay back to consumers ranged from 55-85% of the total tour package paid, minus supplier contract fees and reasonable operating expenses. All groups were aware of our Terms and Conditions prior to booking with Tour Time and had accepted these (noting our refunds went above and beyond what our conditions required).

While our practices give our customers additional assurance and allow us to hold our head high in this regard, we will not be unaffected if stories about unbonded operators bring the entire industry into disrepute.

An existing situation is worsening

We have previously made our views known to the Ministry of Education and MBIE that the school group travel sector should be regulated in some form to provide security for consumer funds.

We have also previously engaged the Chief Executive of TAAZ to assist in bringing this to the attention of the government and media. **(Refer attached)**. While we appreciate that there are many calls on a government's time, we are disappointed there has not been much engagement with the issues on a policy level.

The pandemic has exacerbated the already existing issues, to the detriment of consumers, schools and the industry as a whole. If operators had been required to follow Ministry of Education guidelines, we would not be in this situation.

At the very least, we feel that schools should be urged to follow these guidelines, which are after all posted on the Ministry of Education website, to protect parents' funds when choosing school tour providers.

What can be done

We think the following steps would be prudent:

- The Ministry of Education should engage with TAAZ to create a register of TAAZ bonded operators for schools to engage with for their school group travel to ensure parents funds are safe (as TAAZ has previously suggested).
- The Ministry of Education could, in the meantime actively advocate for schools to only deal with operators committed to TAAZ and to be proactive in educating the senior management of all schools across New Zealand of the financial risks of doing otherwise.

I believe that in the current climate our parents and schools are more at risk than ever. The use of conditional credits in reliance of borders being opened and additional business being contracted is not acceptable. It is irresponsible.

I am available for further discussions on the points raised in this letter and am eager to do my part to see our industry professionally run in accordance with good business practices and with reasonable assurances to consumers about the money they pay over in good faith.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

TOUR TIME NZ LIMITED

Brent Imrie

Director

9(2)(a)

Copy to:

Minister of Tourism & Assoc Minister of Education - Hon. Kelvin Davis k.davis@ministers.govt.nz

Minister of Youth & Assoc Minister of Tourism - Hon. Peeni Henare p.henare@ministers.govt.nz

Ministry of Education - Group Manager Schools - jim.greening@education.govt.nz / enquiries.national@education.govt.nz

Ministry of Education - Senior Advisor School Support - Emily Button - school.support@education.govt.nz

Deputy Leader National Party & Spokesperson for Education - Hon. Nikki Kaye nikki.kaye@parliament.govt.nz

Member for Rodney, National Party - Hon. Mark Mitchell - Mark.Mitchell@parliament.govt.nz

TAAZ - Chief Executive - Andrew Olsen - 9(2)(a)

Weblinks for referral:

1. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300053495/travel-agency-not-signed-up-to-industry-association-rules-about-refunds>
2. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/travel/travel-troubles/300051688/travel-agency-attempts-to-gag-parents-fighting-for-refunds?rm=a>
3. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/300042543/parents-fear-children-will-miss-out-on-school-trip-refunds>
4. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12337866
5. https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12332166
6. <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/travel/2020/05/school-students-lose-thousands-after-overseas-trips-cancelled.html>



Document 11 attachment 2

From: "Temp1 Parata (MIN)" <Temp1.Parata@parliament.govt.nz>

Date: 4 April 2017 11:59:02 am NZST

To: Andrew Olsen 9(2)(a)

Subject: RE: Certified school travel providers.

Kia ora Andrew

On behalf of Hon Hekia Parata, thank you for your email below and apologies on the delayed response.

Your email has been referred to the Ministry of Education for reply on the Minister's behalf. The Ministry of Education will respond to you as soon as they can.

Thank you once again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

Ashleigh Nimmo
Acting Ministerial Assistant
Office of Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education
Ph: 817 9114
Email: Temp1.Parata@parliament.govt.nz

From: Andrew Olsen [[mailto:9\(2\)\(a\)](mailto:9(2)(a)@parliament.govt.nz)]
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 11:02 AM
To: Hekia Parata (MIN)
Subject: Certified school travel providers.

Dear Minister.

Forgive the communication by email but this is a somewhat urgent matter which I would appreciate your direction on.

The Ministry of Education has a recommended guideline which I enclose, referring to the requirement for school group travel to be conducted through either a TAANZ Bonded or an IATA Bonded travel agent. Regrettably, there are organisations being used by schools which are neither and this cuts across the required practice. I hasten to add this is not a commercial competition issue but moreso one that has and will continue to have ramifications on schools when the provider fails. It is also a bad look for the very reputable and self - regulated travel agency sector and we believe completely avoidable if we work together.

Our recommended solution would be 1) to emphasise to all schools the MOE 'asset' and use of a certified provider, 2) that MOE and TAANZ hold a central register of certified providers for school access and 3) TAANZ would be happy to assist in the formation of that register and also the certification of any provider not currently meeting the standard.

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Supporting-students/Student-Wellbeing/OrganisingInternationalGroupVisit.pdf>

We are at your disposal to assist and happy to answer any questions you have.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter

Kind regards,

Andrew Olsen
Chief Executive
TAANZ

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



17 MAY 2017

DR: 1058409

Andrew Olsen
Chief Executive
Travel Agents' Association of New Zealand

9(2)(a)

Dear Andrew

The Minister of Education asked me to reply to your email of 15 March 2017 about certified school travel providers.

The guidelines you refer to are not legal requirements that must be met by schools and Boards of Trustees. Instead, they provide guidance about matters schools and Boards may want to consider when they plan and conduct an international group trip for their students.

I acknowledge your concern about schools using certified school travel providers to ensure they are financially protected in the event of a travel company collapse. The decision regarding the travel company schools and boards use lies with them. Schools are self-managing and while the Ministry of Education can provide guidance and advice, we cannot impose these recommendations.

Thank you for raising your concerns.

Yours sincerely

Jim Greening
Group Manager
Schools and Student Support

Document 11 attachment 4

From: Andrew Olsen
Sent: Thursday, 18 May 2017 11:04 AM
To: 'Enquiries National' <enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: In response to your email of 15 March 2017

Thanks Jim.

I note your position on good practice guidance (as opposed to policy).

We have some experience with school groups that engage non bonded travel agents. When they fail, dreams are shattered and/ or replacement funds are sought. Families are outraged, consumer advocates get involved and it becomes mainstream news. It's a bad look for our sector and yours.

Totally avoidable.

Regards,
Andrew.

From: Enquiries National [<mailto:enquiries.national@education.govt.nz>]
Sent: Wednesday, 17 May 2017 3:46 PM
To: Andrew Olsen 9(2)(a)
Subject: In response to your email of 15 March 2017

Dear Andrew

Please find attached a response to your email of 15 March 2017.

Kind regards

Enquiries National Team | Ministry of Education | 4B
33 Bowen St, Wellington, New Zealand

Note that messages sent to several Ministry email addresses are responded to by this mailbox

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We get the job done *Ka oti i a mātou ngā mahi*

We are respectful, we listen, we learn *He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ako mātou*

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

We work together for maximum impact *Ka mahi ngātahi mō te tūkinga nui tonu*

Great results are our bottom line *Ko ngā huanga tino pai ā mātou whāinga mutunga*



Document 11 attachment 5

From: Andrew Olsen 9(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, 12 May 2017 3:46 PM
To: N.Kaye@ministers.govt.nz
Subject: FW: MoE best practices

Dear Minister,

I contacted your office today about a matter involving the MoE and attend you to another issue being the appointment of Student Horizons as its travel partner for a competition.

<https://education.govt.nz/school/student-support/scholarships-and-competitions/passchendaele/>
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1358186910965451&id=260510504066436

MOE policy stipulates that schools will use travel agents that are bonded with IATA or with TAANZ. This company is not TAANZ Bonded and there is no evidence it is IATA bonded. We believe it is important that standards are maintained in our unregulated sector and that consumers are aware of the implications in the event a travel agent fails. The Ministry policy seems to take that position as well. We view the decision to appoint this agency as being contrary to the standards of the MOE policy.

Perhaps the Ministry might review this matter and make a concerted effort to adhere to its policy?

Regards,

Andrew Olsen
Chief Executive
TAANZ.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Email 12

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)

Sent: Wednesday, 15 July 2020 10:47 AM

To: Nathan Stewart <NStewart@feildinghigh.school.nz>; Media Responses Shared Mailbox
<Media@education.govt.nz>

Subject: Official Information Act request

Hi there,

I would like to request all correspondence between Student Horizons and Feilding High School in the last six months, from February 1st to July 15.

Thanks,

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9(2)(a)



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Email 13

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 15 July 2020 10:50 AM
To: office@eggs.school.nz; Media Responses Shared Mailbox <Media@education.govt.nz>
Subject: Official Information Act Request

Hi there,

I would like to request all school correspondence between Student Horizons and Epsom Girls Grammar School, including Board of Trustees, in the last six months - from February 1st to July 15.

Thanks,

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9(2)(a)



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Email 14

Jeremy Barnes

From: 9(2)(a)

Sent: Friday, 17 July 2020 12:02 PM

To: office@macleans.school.nz; Media Responses Shared Mailbox <Media@education.govt.nz>

Subject: Official Information Act request

Hi there,

Under the Official Information Act, I would like to request all school correspondence between Student Horizons and Macleans College, including Board of Trustees, in the last six months - from February 1st to July 15.

Thanks,

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9(2)(a)



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