



Bus Information 2023

In order to qualify for a Ministry of Education fully funded directly resourced bus run we need to maintain a minimum of 8 eligible students on one route.

Given that we can't guarantee this, and we are unable to service just the one route we are considered a special case by the Ministry of Education and receive direct resourcing of approx \$22,000 GST EXCL per annum to operate our bus run via a formal agreement.

In 2021 the then Board undertook to lease the current bus from Vehicle Flexi Lease at that time the school roll was sitting at around the 12 pupil mark and there was a desire to have a bus that the whole school could use for various outings. Subsequently the roll climbed to 18 and currently sits at 7. This fluctuation is fairly typical for Waitaria Bay School.

A five year lease was negotiated and signed prior to the 2021 and 2022 weather events when the road/s was in significantly better condition. The five year lease meant that monthly repayments sit at around \$1003.71 GST INCL per month, making it more affordable than a regular 3 year lease. Unfortunately the current repayment schedule takes the school over a set limit of borrowing and this has been noted by our accountants and the Auditor on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

There are a number of requirements that must be met when sourcing a vehicle for a school bus run and there was a distinct request for a diesel vehicle. There was also only one company prepared to lease a bus to Waitaria Bay School.

As you can appreciate, the combined cost of the lease, along with driver wages, and fuel, takes us over what we receive from the Ministry and it is up to the school to manage the shortfall. Our December finance reports show that the bus runs at a loss of \$5,339 per annum.

In 2018 an agreement was reached with the Ministry and the wider community. With the wider community agreeing to contribute to the costs of running the school bus. Traditionally the school has received generous sponsorship and support from local businesses such as Sherrington Honey, which has helped to cover the shortfall.

Due to the impact of Covid, the weather events and road closures our local businesses have been unable to continue to support the school bus with the same generosity. Ultimately any future shortfall will need to be covered from our annual Operations Grant, and budgeted for accordingly. An alternative would be to step up our fundraising efforts and/or seek sponsorship via grants and organisations such as the Lions Club or Pub Charities.

The current bus with its long wheel base, high sides, and all wheel drive function is less than ideal on our current roading network post the weather events, and I continue to work with Marlborough Roads, the Ministry of Education transport group and the Lease company to find a suitable solution.