

Horizons bus service – COVID-19 Alert Level 2

Tēnā koutou

We hope that this finds you all safe and well.

The Government has placed the Manawatu-Whanganui region into Alert Level 2 as of 12 noon on Wednesday 12 August. At this stage Horizons will continue to operate normal timetables.

Latest service update information can be found on our website at

<https://www.horizons.govt.nz/buses-transport/bus-notice>

We ask that your students adhere to the Covid-19 Level 2 requirements to ensure the successful operation of the bus services and for the safety of your students and bus drivers. We would appreciate you making your students' parents/caregivers aware of these requirements too.

Horizons provides a mix of general public bus routes and dedicated school routes. There are different requirements around physical distancing for each of these:

General public bus routes

- If you are sick, do not travel on public transport.
- Physical distancing will be re-introduced from 12 noon, this means we will need customers to adhere to a 1m physical distancing on buses and a 2m physical distancing at bus stops – if possible wear face masks whilst using our services as per Ministry of Health and Government guidelines.
- Buses will retain front door boarding for the time being which will allow for customer accessibility needs.
- Please also note that we will not be able to get physical distancing stickers onto vehicles/stops in time for the 12 noon deadline, so we ask that you self-manage distancing by sitting one seat apart and remaining 2m apart whilst waiting for your service
- The physical distancing requirements will impact the number of customers that can be carried on each bus – for example, a typical bus is able to accommodate up to 55 people normally, however can only carry 20 at Alert Level 2.
- Horizons will be working with our operators to provide backup services where possible but the number of available buses and drivers is limited. It is important passengers are aware that there are restrictions on these services and that there may be delays in dispatching back up buses.
- To support contact tracing we encourage your students to use registered Bee Cards for their travel. If this is not possible for them they can also register their travel using the QR codes provided on the bus, via phoning 0508 800 800 or going to <https://horizons-covid-register.azurewebsites.net/contact> and completing the form.

Dedicated school bus routes

- Physical distancing requirements do not apply where services are used exclusively by school students. However, contact tracing is an essential requirement.
- To support Ministry of Health contact tracing requirements, a record of student bus use is required. A record of daily use is not required but a general record of the names of students using the services and what routes they use is necessary. This information does not need to be sent to Horizons Regional Council but should be held by each school and made available should the Ministry of Health require the information for contact tracing purposes. Again we

encourage students to use registered Bee Card for their travel to make contact tracing much easier.

Below is a list of the current dedicated school bus routes. Please encourage your students to utilise these services wherever possible. Please note that these services are separate to services provided under the Ministry of Education.

PALMERSTON NORTH

- St Peter to MST 1520

WHANGANUI

- Castlecliff to Whanganui Girls College 0800
- Whanganui Girls College to Castlecliff 1510
- Gonville-Castlecliff-City College 0740
- City College-Castlecliff-Gonville 1510
- Rutherford Junior High School 1510

Additional buses will be provided for the following services to accommodate to facilitate for higher passenger levels

FEILDING

- Palmerston North to Feilding 0740: will be covered by two bus one for school children only
- Feilding to Palmerston North 1534: Additional bus will be provided from Feilding High School

Full timetable information is available at <https://www.horizons.govt.nz/buses-transport/bus-routes-transport/downloadable-timetables>

Please also note that:

- We request your assistance with managing the after school boarding of buses, to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained, and to make arrangements for any students not able to board the bus due to the restricted capacity caused by the physical distancing requirements. Please note, bus drivers are not able to perform this function.

We will be back in contact if any of the above information changes.

Lastly, we thank you all for your patience and support over this different way of operating and changes within our community.

Please do not hesitate to contact us transport@horizons.govt.nz if you need any additional information.

Ngā mihi nui,

Rhona Hewitt
Transport Services Manager