

Safe speeds around schools

Ngā tere haumaruru tata ki ngā kura

New variable speed limit - coming to your school soon

To help keep young New Zealanders safe, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) is setting a new variable speed limit that targets the times when vulnerable children are most active around our schools.



What this means for your school

As required by the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024, a variable speed limit of 30km/h outside your school on the state highway has been approved by the Director of Land Transport.

We're working through the details for installation and will do our best to minimise disruption. Details will be shared via school communications channels once confirmed, such as timings for installation and if there will be any impact on travel around school.

When will the variable speed limit operate, and how will people know it's operating?

The variable speed limit will be active when students are travelling to and from school, at the beginning and end of each school day. The school and NZTA may also turn the signs on for activities such as late starts, or early finish times, or school functions, when there is similar risk to tamariki.

When operating, the variable speed limit will appear on a flashing electronic sign. If the sign is not turned on, the normal permanent speed limit applies.

Variable speed limits are legally enforceable.

Helping students understand the importance of safe speed limits

If you're a parent, caregiver or teacher wanting to help students understand why safe speeds are important around schools, there are several resources available in the **NZTA Education Portal**.

These include ideas for fun and interactive lessons you can do with tamariki in the classroom, in the courtyard or at home.

Scan the QR code to go to the Education Portal resource, **Safe speeds around schools**.



For any queries, please email schoolspeedmanagement@nzta.govt.nz

Safe speeds around schools

Ngā tere haumarū tata ki ngā kura

30km/h variable speed limit



How was 30km/h chosen for the variable speed limit outside my school?

International best practice is that 30km/h is the safer speed on roads and streets where a high number of tamariki are present or where we are wanting to encourage more walking, biking or scootering to and from school.

This is because people who walk or ride bikes have a strong chance of surviving a crash and avoiding serious injury if the person driving is travelling at 30km/h or less. The risk of death or serious injury doubles between 30km/h and 40km/h, and doubles again at 50km/h.

The Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024 (the rule) requires that a variable speed limit of 30km/h be applied to the road outside the school gate of all category one schools unless the permanent speed limit on the road is already 30km/h or less.

Why didn't you permanently reduce the speed outside the school?

We need to balance safety around schools with the efficiency of traffic movements on the state highway. A variable speed limit makes the area outside the school safer for vehicle movements at school drop-off/pick-up times.

The rule sets out how we manage speed limits. The rule requires variable speed limits to be applied to the road outside the school gates of all schools.

I haven't seen a child walking or cycling along this road, so why do I need to slow down?

Conversations with the school and community have confirmed that there are students walking, cycling or scootering near the state highway outside the school, and/or parents and school buses dropping-off students where they must walk along or cross the state highway to reach the school.

Children are some of our most vulnerable road users because, compared with adults, they are generally less visible to other road users and less able to see the road over parked vehicles and other obstacles. They are also less likely to judge speed and distance accurately.

Lower speed limits around schools at pick-up and drop-off times help protect students walking, cycling and scootering.

How did you decide where to put the variable speed limit signs?

The rule requires variable speed limits be installed outside school gates. We have installed the signs approximately 150m either side of a school entrance on the state highway. In some cases, the signs are placed further away when this is more practical or enhances safety.

Will a variable speed limit operate out of normal school drop-off and pick-up times?

Yes, if required by the school to accommodate the movement of a high number of tamariki during school related events.

Are variable speed limits enforceable?

Yes, variable speed limits are enforceable speed limits.

Did you consult with the public on these changes?

While we have previously consulted with the public on proposed variable speed limits outside schools, most recently in November/December 2022, the rule specifically exempts schools from consultation and requires that variable speed limits are implemented on roads outside the school gate before 1 July 2026.



Rotorua Girls' High School



Variable speed limits for schools

A variable speed limit (VSL) will operate during school travel periods at the start and end of the school day. It may also operate for 10 minutes at other times when there are school-related vehicle or pedestrian activities. The VSL operates when the speed limit is displayed on an electronic or static sign, and is legally enforceable. At all other times, the speed limit is the underlying permanent posted speed limit.