

## Student Population

Kuper 50 students daily, plus periodic island school special events

Thetis 7 students daily, plus periodic island school special events

## Boarding

Action by ...

### From Islands

- 1 School field trips off Chemainus and Kuper do not have guaranteed boarding. The Penelakut indicated that they do have a way to get their buses to the front of the line on Kuper Island, if necessary. So it seemed this was mainly an issue on Thetis Island which is made more challenging by the number of vehicles and children involved in special events. Doug Snyder explained the challenges on Thetis that made a priority boarding approach unworkable ... no on-island BC Ferries attendant, and no extra line for queuing waiting cars.

**suggestion:** On Thetis, assess the feasibility of getting a community decision made that would allow school children to get on first. Then determine a practical approach to organizing vehicles.

FAC Chris Pegg

- 2 There seemed to be a lack of clarity about how and when to communicate with BC Ferries, and who to communicate to. The point of contact for the schools and communities is Cheri Maisonneuve, Manager of Community Relations. Future calendars of events should be communicated to Cheri with as much notice as possible. Cheri is on the Thetis e-spokes mailing list.

**action:** Cheri will be approaching the schools and camps to discuss this process and to examine any ways that communication can be increased. She will be looking for ways to ensure the any arrivals and departures do not impact the regular commuter students getting to and from school on Vancouver Island.

Cheri  
Maisonneuve

### From Chemainus

- 3 current procedure is ... if students don't make the 3:30pm sailing a signature and explanation is required. This form is required by the Ministry of Transport, and the audit department of BC Ferries. It provides the basis for auditable proof for payment of BC Ferries by the Dept of Education. Penelakut tried student cards but didn't find it effective. The cards only got torn, etc, so they were discontinued. The general feeling coming out of the discussion was that the card approach didn't seem practical.

- 4 There seems to be an issue with one particular Toll Booth attendant.

**action:** BC Ferries will look into this issue and inform all staff of the correct procedures

Phil Benbow

- 5 **suggestion:** explore what the actual Dept of Education "requirements" are for the signing in of students. There was an understanding that students under 12 required the signature of a parent/coach/student. Evaluate the practicality of this in our setting.

Cheri  
Maisonneuve

**action:** Steve Frankel, Thetis Island parent, offered to call local School District Transportation department to understand better the requirements and the procedures for the forms

Steve Frankel

- 6 There was also a request to see if more than one sailing could be designated as a "school sailing" so that the "no signature required" rule could apply to more than just the 3:30pm sailing.

Cheri  
Maisonneuve

- 7 Homeschooler parents present asked that the definition of "student" be looked at since the Board of Education recognizes their children as students yet when going on field trips they are being asked to pay.

Cheri  
Maisonneuve

- 8 There is an occasional issue with ships reaching their full capacity and students having to wait for the next ferry. (i.e. large groups are going to Islands for special events or conferences).

## R. Minutes of Meeting re Children and Ferries 06\_15\_07.doc

- suggestion:** see Boarding section above #1 re suggestion to have community support island students board first. Also when Cheri visits Islands she will discuss an approach with the camps/centres that have the large groups
- 9 A concern was expressed that most school teachers didn't realize that students may miss ferry when given detentions or when requested to stay after class. Children are unsupervised if they miss the ferry.  
**suggestion:** communication to teachers by School offices
- 10 concern with synchronization of ferry schedule and school adjournment time. Currently High School students have no bus and tight schedule (out at 3:10, ferry at 3:30). Bill Dickie reminded that the schedule can be changed if agreed to by Communities and BC Ferries. Except for Chemainus High School this is not an issue with Penelakut students because of busing.  
**suggestion:** Elementary school bus to pick up high school students on way to ferry.  
**action:** Principal, Chemainus Elementary Community School will examine feasibility of this.
- 11 **suggestion:** consider if there are any ways to make Chemainus Ferry terminal more "friendly" to children. (i.e. desk/table in terminal so students can do school work.

## In Transit

### Capacity

- 1 Concern that in inclement weather there is insufficient covered area to house all students as well as other passengers. It was noted that the seating is not comfortable. Suggestions were made that priority seating be given to locals, and that additional shelter was needed.  
**action:** BC Ferries to define what alternatives are available.

### On Deck

- 2 Concern with impact of second hand smoke, in spite of "No Smoking" policy.  
**action:** BC Ferries is currently working through technology issues with a new software chip for the new vessel announcement system. In the meantime Captains are making verbal announcement on all runs.
- 3 Concern with impact of occasional drugs and alcohol on deck. Some parents indicated that they had observed. BC Ferry policy is that no one is allowed on board the vessel who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. BC Ferries reserves the right to deny passage to these individuals. This was seen as a general safety and security issue since it can lead to abusive behaviour. BC Ferries reported this was not unique to Route 20 and had been dealt with on a case by case basis. Chief Lisa Shaver reported that the Penelakut had implemented a "Healthy Community policy" (including built-in deterrents) on Kuper Island with positive initial results.  
**Suggestion:** Thetis Island to pursue implementation of a policy, similar to Penelakut's, which would set acceptable standards for all community members and visitors (especially as pertains to alcohol, drugs, and abusive language and behaviour). This would strengthen the position of BC Ferry employees when they have to take decisive action.

### General

- 4 A question was raised concerning whether children know what to do in challenging situations ... e.g. abuse, unsafe situation, ship alarm, emergency announcements, etc.? Discussion covered the fact that this is a shared responsibility between parents, adults and senior teens on board, as well as BC Ferries, to help children in these circumstances. Cheri Maisonneuve and Cpt. Bill Dickie would like to do safety tours for all of the schools concerned.

## R. Minutes of Meeting re Children and Ferries 06\_15\_07.doc

**suggestion:** establish an education program to make children aware of who to go to, how to get help, and what to do in a variety of challenging circumstances. This can be done by BC Ferries with parents, and in schools, or through tours onto the vessel. This could be even broadened to include community wide meeting.

**action:** Penelakut to request a tour for their school children similar to that done recently for Thetis Island School children. Chemainus Elementary to consider inviting BC Ferries to address classes on Ferry travel.

Penelakut  
Linda Porte

- 5 A question was raised about who was directly responsible for the children while they are in transit. It was pointed out that BC Ferries will give free, return passage to chaperones for groups of children. Funding is also available from RCMP and Dept of Education. The Penelakut reported that they have a chaperone on all daily school runs who is responsible for asll the Kuper Island students. Questions were raised about why backup chaperones were not able to get free passage and whether there was some set ratio to determine students per chaperone that would allow more than one chaperone to get free passage.

**action:** Island schools to advise BC Ferries ahead of time to ensure that their chaperone, or any backup chaperone, will get free passage. They should explain if the chaperone will not be responsible for ALL students on board from their island.

Thetis and  
Kuper schools

### Disembarking

- 1 Concern for safety of children and liability of drivers when children run behind cars going up the ramps. New ferry has gates so BC Ferry deck hands can hold children back until cars have left ferry ramp. But what about replacement ferry? Discussion recognized that this is not a BC Ferry issue only, but also an issue for the parents of the children to address. Parents need to be encouraged too. This item will be tabled for review when the MV Kuper rotates off Route 20.

**action:** Thetis and Kuper FAC members to discuss a community awareness program

FAC Chris Pegg


**action:** BC Ferries is responding to a request to clarify liability in this situation.

Cheri  
Maisonneuve

### Other points of information raised during meeting

- 1 Students frequently (and legitimately) make more than one round trip per day. Free ferry travel is for attending school and for **all school-sponsored events and non-school "organized youth activities"**. So, free trips for students (Government pays) can be for more than one trip per day, with no specified cut off time by which return trip must be taken.

### What next?

- 1 FAC members and BC Ferries have identified four items that are both important and doable by September start of school 2007. They are  ones above.
- 2 Scheduling of an annual meeting with parents, schools, Ferry Advisory Committee members and BC Ferries to review progress to date and set priorities for action before the next Fall school opening.

FAC Chris Pegg

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