Schoolbus Safety – Proper Seat Belt Use and Driver Posture Fatality File

BUS TRAGEDY

Teen girl killed in motorway bus crash ‘was one of few on board wearing a seat belt’

A TEENAGE girl killed in a motorway bus crash was one of the few on board wearing a seat belt, an inquest heard yesterday.

Jessica Baker, 15, suffered a fatal head injury when the bus, with 50 pupils on board, hit a tree after going up an embankment.

Driver Stephen Shrimpton, 40, who also died, had heart disease which caused him to collapse at the wheel.

CCTV showed that many of the youngsters on the vehicle, which rolled back onto the hard shoulder of the M53, were “unrestrained”, it was said.

However, Jessica appeared to be sitting in place “not moving in the same way everyone else is moving”. A post-mortem revealed she had bruising consistent with seat belt use.

Senior coroner Andre Rebello said it was “more likely than not” she had the restraint on.

The inquest heard he had previously sent a prevention of future deaths report to ministers raising concerns about the lack of seat belt use on the bus.

Jessica, of Blacon, Chester, was on her way to West Kirby Grammar School in Wirral, Merseyside, when the northbound coach crashed

on September 29 last year.

Children from Calday Grange Grammar School were also on the vehicle.

In all, four were taken to hospital, including a boy of 14 who suffered “life-changing” injuries. Thirteen others were treated for minor injuries.

Mr. Rebello recorded a road traffic collision conclusion into the death of Jessica whose parents, nurses Sean Baker and Sarah Merrington, attended the hearing at Gerard Majella Courthouse in Liverpool.

He told them: “I know she was very much loved.”

No inquest was held into Mr Shrimpton’s death as it was due to natural causes, he said.

Source: *Thesun.ie*