



# Greater Christchurch Education Renewal – Interim decisions

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*Information for school staff*

February 2013



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

*Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga*

# An opportunity for a brighter future for schools

The education sector, like everything else in greater Christchurch, has experienced huge disruption as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes. The face and makeup of Christchurch and the education sector needs to respond to those changes. The Government is committed to rebuilding education in greater Christchurch to create one of the best schooling networks in the country. It is investing \$1 billion over the next 10 years to ensure children have access to innovative, modern schools. This means new facilities, with the latest information technology including access to ultra-fast broadband, flexible spaces and energy-efficient buildings that better reflect the different learning needs of students today.

As part of the greater Christchurch education renewal plan, Education Minister Hekia Parata announced proposals affecting 38 of the 215 schools in greater Christchurch in September 2012. Two of the 38 schools (Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay) requested voluntary closure and closed on 27 January 2013. Five schools in the Aranui area were given additional time to provide feedback because of the complexity of their proposals. The Boards of the remaining 31 schools submitted their feedback on the proposals in December 2012.

On Monday 18 February 2013, the Education Minister announced interim decisions for 31 schools. Of these 31 schools, 12 should remain open, seven should close and 12 should merge into six schools. A number of factors have been looked at when making decisions about schools including earthquake damage, declining rolls, population movement and future growth, building issues, school locations and what opportunities there are to create modern schools and how each school fits into the whole education network across greater Christchurch. The Ministry of Education will work with The Boards and staff of each of the affected schools to ensure access to quality education for children is not compromised throughout the process, and that staff and families are well informed each step of the way.

# What the interim decisions mean for you

Your school's Board of Trustees and/or Principal has been provided with information about these interim decisions and what it means for your school. The information below will help you understand what the interim decisions mean, what will happen next and where you can get further information and support.

## **1 – Proposal to close or merge a school should not proceed.**

Schools have until 28 March 2013 to provide feedback on the interim decision. This feedback will be considered and the Education Minister will make a final decision by late May 2013.

## **2 – Proposal to close or merge should proceed.**

Schools have until 28 March 2013 to provide any feedback as to why the merger or closure should not go ahead before a final decision is made.

This feedback will be considered along with the initial submission and the Education Minister will make a final decision about your school by late May 2013.

Your school Board may also choose to consult with the school community.

# If my school does merge or close, when will it happen?

Final decisions about school mergers and closures are expected to be announced by late May 2013.

Your school's Board of Trustees will have been advised of the interim decision, and of a proposed date for merger or closure. If you have not been informed of this, ask your Board or Principal for this information. You can also go to [www.shapingeducation.govt.nz](http://www.shapingeducation.govt.nz)

In most cases, it has been indicated that mergers and closures should happen in January 2014. This will give the school workforce, students, their families and communities some certainty sooner rather than later on the education options available in their area.

# If my school does merge or close what will this mean for school staff?

There are processes for school mergers and closures and school staff have clear rights and obligations.

## School mergers

### Teaching staff

- » Teaching staff from any schools that merge have the right to apply for the new positions. This is a two stage process. Initially, the recruitment for teachers at merged schools would first be opened to existing permanent teachers at the two affected schools. If there are no suitable applicants, positions are then advertised and filled externally. If any teaching staff are unsuccessful in applying for positions, the provisions outlined in their relevant employment agreement apply.
- » The Principal's position at any merged schools must be advertised externally.

## **Support staff (including caretakers, cleaners and ground staff)**

- » Support staff from any schools that merge have the right to apply for new positions. If unsuccessful in applying for a position, the provisions in the relevant employment agreement apply.

## **School closures**

### **Teaching staff**

- » There is a formal and clearly defined process for any school closures and all teaching staff, including the Principal, are covered by the provisions outlined in their relevant employment agreement.
- » Teaching staff from any schools that close are able to apply for roles in other schools but will not have preferred status for any positions.

### **Support staff (including caretakers, cleaners, and ground staff)**

- » Support staff at any schools that close would also be affected and the provisions of the relevant employment agreement would apply.
- » The employer costs of any redundancy entitlements would be met from Board funds.

Further information about your rights and obligations are detailed in your employment agreement.



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## *Where can I go for support and advice?*

You can get more information about the process your school will go through from your School Board (as your employer), or your Principal. If you are a member of any of the following unions you can also get information and support from them – New Zealand Educational Institute, Post Primary Teachers Association, Public Service Association, Amalgamated Workers Unions, or Service and Food Workers Union.

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You can find more information on the Shaping Education website:  
*[www.shapingeducation.govt.nz](http://www.shapingeducation.govt.nz)*

Alternatively, you can contact the Ministry of Education on *0800 746 338* or email *[shaping.education@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:shaping.education@minedu.govt.nz)*

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All school staff can access free support from EAP Services Limited. Phone *03 348 0854* to find out more about their services.

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