

Frequently asked questions

Page 1 - Decisions

Page 1 – Next steps

Page 3 – Wellbeing and transitions

Page 3 – Enrolling students and enrolment schemes

Page 4 – Staffing

Page 5 – Property

Page 5 – Finance and assets

Page 7 – Special education

Page 7 – Specialist programmes

Page 7 – Other

Decisions

1. *What decisions have been announced on 16 December 2014?*

On 16 December 2014, the Boards were informed that Our Lady of Fatima School and St Paul's School (Dallington) will both close on 27 January 2016. It is proposed that a new integrated school would be established on the Our Lady of Fatima site and open on 28 January 2016.

2. *Why this decision?*

The Catholic Bishop of Christchurch (Bishop Barry Jones) has applied to the Minister of Education to cancel the integration agreements of both schools in order to have one parish primary school in the Catholic Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Mairehau.

Next steps

3. *What happens now for the affected schools?*

The Ministry will be working closely with each of the Boards and the Proprietor from the beginning of 2015 to discuss what will happen next, and what support is available to them and their school communities.

The Ministry will work with the Proprietor to ensure that schools, students and their families are well informed and supported each step of the way.

4. *What will happen to the Board of Trustees at each of the two schools?*

The Boards of both schools will continue to govern their own schools until the date of the closure.

5. *My school has been advised that the Minister's final decision is that the school is to close in January 2016. What happens now?*

The Ministry will work closely with the Boards and the Proprietor of each of these schools early in 2015 to go through the process and timeline for implementing the Minister's decision. The schools will continue to operate as normal for 2015. The Ministry will work with the Board and principal from each of these schools to ensure that there is a focus on the ongoing provision of quality teaching and learning programmes, and the schools, students, parents and communities are given the support they need.

6. *What is the role of the change manager?*

The change manager ensures that the closure of the school is well managed operationally. They work with the principal, Proprietor and Ministry to plan and implement the process. This includes:

- supporting the principal with their role
- working with the community, in particular parents of children at the school to ensure they have enough information and support to make decisions about where their children will go to school and what help they will need
- ensuring that all employment documentation is up to date and accurate
- ensuring that the school's asset register is up to date
- ensuring that the school's resources are retained for the proposed new school or distributed to other schools in the network where students may enrol
- school buildings are left clean, tidy and secure and the keys handed over to the Ministry following a closure.

7. *What is the role of the residual agent?*

The residual agent oversees the school's finances before the date of closure and then settles the school's accounts (paying final invoices etc.) following the date of closure. They also prepare draft financial statements for audit and present them to the Office of the Auditor General. The Board pays for the services of its residual agent.

8. *What is the process for establishing and integrating a new school?*

The Minister has invited the Bishop to submit an application for the establishment and integration of a new school in Mairehau. Should the establishment and integration be approved, the Ministry will then seek nominations for the Establishment Board of Trustees (EBoT). This is likely to happen in March/April 2015.

The EBoT is made up of five appointed people and it can co-opt up to four others. The Proprietor has the opportunity to have at least one representative on the EBoT.

The EBoT is usually in place for about 3 – 6 months after the school becomes operational, and then elections are held for a Board of Trustees.

9. *What is the role of Establishment Board of Trustees (EBoT)?*

The job of the EBoT is to work with the community to develop a vision and philosophy for the school, develop its policies and other documentation, and appoint staff.

A governance facilitator is appointed to support and guide the EBoT as it sets out to establish a new school. NZSTA is also available to assist the EBoT.

Wellbeing and transitions

10. What support will be available for students, parents, teachers and families?

Each school has been given a package that outlines the support that will be available and how to access that support. The Ministry will work with both schools to ensure education is not compromised throughout the process and that staff and families are well informed each step of the way.

Your school should be your first point of contact if you or your child have any questions around the transition process.

Parents can find more information at:

www.shapingeducation.govt.nz

Call: 0800 746 338

Email: shaping.education@minedu.govt.nz

When the time does come to transition to different schools, the Ministry will work with schools to identify what support could be provided to students to ensure a smooth transition. That support could include:

- providing school visits for groups of children who may move to a particular school
- setting up buddy programmes so children have contact with other children at their next school before they make the change
- holding parent meetings with the staff of the next school
- appointing change managers to work with closing or merging schools.

Schools should be the first point of contact for parents or children with any questions around transitions.

Enrolling students and enrolment schemes

11. How do I find out which school I can enrol my child at?

You can find schools close to where you live by searching on the TKI website at: www.nzschools.tki.org.nz. If you would prefer, you can phone the Ministry of Education contact centre on 0800 746 338 where someone will be able to help you with your query.

NOTE: You can enrol your child at any state or state integrated school that does not have an enrolment scheme.

12. Do I have to enrol my child at the nearest school?

No. Parents are free to enrol their child at any school where they meet the eligibility requirements of the enrolment zone, special character and/or maximum roll.

13. Who can enrol at the proposed new school?

The proposed new school will have a maximum roll and preference criteria related to its special character defined within the integration agreement. The school will also have an allowance for non-preference students that can be enrolled if there is space to do so.

14. What if the children all enrol at different schools?

Parents are free to enrol their child at any school where they meet the eligibility requirements of the enrolment zone, special character and/or maximum roll. Parents can enrol their child in any school that does not have an enrolment scheme in place.

Staffing

15. Can permanent staff be appointed at closing schools?

Generally, no permanent staff can be appointed at closing schools.

16. When am I going to know if my position is safe?

There are clear processes that have been agreed between the Ministry and NZEI for these closures and the proposed establishment and integration of a new school.

17. What's the difference between the Principals' and Teacher study awards, the Christchurch Earthquake Teacher Training Support Fund and retraining?

A. *Study Awards* are offered through TeachNZ and are open to all principals and teachers employed in a permanent or fixed term position (12 months or longer) in New Zealand. See <http://www.teachnz.govt.nz/teacher-awards/directory/primary-principals-and-teachers-study-award/#Primary> Teachers' Study Leave Award for further information.

The *Christchurch Earthquake Teacher Training Support Fund* is available for teachers and Principals in a permanent or fixed term position (12 months or longer) in greater Christchurch schools only. There are 20 available and the study release time is four hours a week. This can be used flexibly throughout the school year to suit your study requirements as long as it is in agreement with your school. There is a contribution of up to \$1600 towards course fees.

Teachers who opt for supernumerary redeployment can apply with the support of both employing Boards of Trustees. Applications will open in July/August 2015.

Retraining to a course approved by the Ministry of Education is one of the surplus staffing options in the respective employment agreements that may be available to a teacher from a school that is closing whose position has been disestablished. Union representatives can provide information about surplus staffing or retraining options.

18. What support is available to staff during this time?

Staff can get support from their Board of Trustees, from their union (NZEI, SFWU, AWU, PSA) if they are members, and from EAP (phone 0800 327 669). The Ministry will be able to provide information about further support that may be available.

19. What happens when teachers from schools that are closing, need to have their registration signed off in 2016 or later, but they are in a different school, or are not currently employed?

There are a number of ways that the situation can be dealt with depending on the specifics of the teacher.

- Some teachers will be employed as a teacher in another school (or centre) when their practising certificate is due to expire and the endorser will then be the teacher's current professional leader.
- The Council can process applications for practising certificates up to six months before the practising certificate expiry date.

Teachers who want further information should contact the Teachers' Council on:
Phone: 04 471 0852 **Email:** inquiries@teacherscouncil.govt.nz

Property

20. Who is responsible for the property for a new state integrated school?

If a new state integrated school is approved and established, the Proprietor will ensure that adequate and appropriate property is provided.

Finance and assets

21. What is EDI funding?

When schools close or merge, additional resourcing called Education Development Initiative (EDI), paid from the savings created by the reorganisation, is available for projects that strengthen students' achievement.

In closures, the school where the student next enrolls is eligible to access EDI funding. The receiving school must sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry about accepting the funding and then submit a plan to their local Ministry for how the EDI funding will be used to enhance student achievement. The receiving school has 6 years in which to use this funding.

A decision has been made to retain EDI funding to the greater Christchurch schools with students enrolled in announced closures or mergers. This means that if students leave greater Christchurch to go to school elsewhere, their new school does not receive EDI funding.

22. We're a closing school and we've been told we can use EDI funding once the final decision was gazetted to help our students and families with the changes. So are there rules about how much we can spend and on what, or is it up to us?

We expect all schools involved in the school reorganisation process will make professional, responsible and wise decisions about the use of funding, whether it is locally raised funding or Crown funding – operational or EDI.

EDI funding is to support the transition and to strengthen education in the newly established or receiving schools. EDI funding can also be used to help students with the transition between their current school and their next school for example:

- purchasing additional support to help develop transition plans, including ensuring assessment data about student learning and achievement is up to date and complete prior to closure
- providing additional teacher aide time/relievers to take any students enrolling in another school for several afternoons in term four for buddy programmes.

The Board of Trustees of a closing school may want to signal how they would like EDI funding generated by its schools to be spent. This will be recorded in the EDI Memorandum of Agreement and within reason, the change manager/s and the Ministry will endeavour to make sure that this occurs.

If the Board of a closing school would like to access its EDI funding for a transition project, they should talk with their senior adviser about the approval required and the steps to be taken.

Before a school can access EDI funding a memorandum of agreement about its use must be signed with the Ministry.

23. Our school is closing – what happens to all our furniture, equipment and resources? Can we sell it or give it away?

In this case, it is likely that the physical assets of each school will become the assets of the proposed newly established school should it be approved. The Board is the caretaker of the crown assets during the closure process boards and staff of closing schools should not get involved in allocating furniture, equipment or resources. This is the job of the change manager and residual agent.

Once the change manager has been appointed, they will ensure the asset register is up to date. They will then discuss where those assets should go with the Board and staff of the closing school, and the EBoT or Boards of likely receiving schools. It is unlikely that any transfers will take place until just prior to closure as most assets – furniture and resources - will be required to maintain delivery of quality teaching and learning programmes until the school closes.

Note that Crown assets must remain within the state education system - they cannot be 'given' to individuals. The Proprietor will manage any assets that he owns, for example assets related to the special character of the school.

Any funds the PTA has are considered part of the Board's assets. The change manager will help the Boards of closing schools to work through all this process.

24. What will happen to the artefacts that are so special to our school community?

Some schools have artefacts, such as memorial gates, cups or awards that have special significance to the school and its community. The Ministry and change manager will work with schools to identify these artefacts, discuss what options there are and what the school/community preference is, working to ensure where possible that happens.

25. What happens to banked staffing in a closure?

In a closure, banked staffing whether in credit or debit will be returned to the Crown. Senior advisors are available to assist schools with working through this process.

26. What about our Trust?

A Board that has received and holds in a Trust any property (gifts for funding scholarships, or for other education purposes) may apply to the Public Trustee to devise a scheme to modify the Trust in light of the closure or merger. The change manager will help Boards work through this.

Special Education

27. *My child receives an Outreach Service from a special school. Will this continue?*

Yes it will continue. No change to delivery of this service is anticipated.

28. *My child has been receiving lots of support from teacher aides. How do I know that support will still be there if I have to change schools?*

In many cases teacher aide support is provided as part of the special education programme for students who are eligible for specialist support programmes, including those students accessing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) funding. The support programme would be retained according to your child's needs regardless of the school they attend.

Teacher aides are also funded by individual schools to provide support for a wider group of students. If that is the case for your child, you should talk with the Principals of the present and future schools about whether that support is likely to continue for your child after the change.

29. *Will my child have access to the same specialist services, such as Resource Teacher Learning Behaviour (RTLB), if they have to change schools?*

RTLB support will continue to be available for a child who moves to a new school.

Specialist programmes

30. *How is students' access to technology education being factored into this renewal programme?*

Learning community clusters have been developed across greater Christchurch. These clusters consist of schools and early childhood providers in a geographical area and those with a special interest, for example, Catholic schools. Clusters schools and ECE providers have been asked to work together, and with other education providers in their learning community cluster to develop provision that best meets the needs of the learners in the cluster. This may mean that the location of technology provision changes in the future.

31. *I enrolled my child at this school because it has such a good music programme. How do I find another school that offers a similar programme?*

Talk with the principal at your child's school. They may be able to identify other schools with good music programmes where you could enrol your child (depending on eligibility). You could also ask other parents, inquire of other schools, check individual school's websites, or look through various schools' ERO reports which may refer to a school's curriculum strengths (www.ero.govt.nz).

Other

32. *My children have to go to another school, how will they get to their new school?*

The current Ministry funded buses that take students from Dallington to the Champion St site will finish at the end of 2015.

From the beginning of 2016, school transport provision will be provided for children that meet the eligibility requirements. These requirements will be discussed as part of the closure process so that all parents are clear about what they are eligible to

receive and any changes to the current school bus routes as a result of the closure of the school.

If students are not eligible for school transport assistance, then parents need to ensure that they get safely to their new school. Further information about school transport is available at the Ministry website:

www.minedu.govt.nz/~media/MinEdu/Files/EducationSectors/PrimarySecondary/SchoolOpsTransport/Factsheets/Factsheet1October2012.pdf

33. *My school provides a very successful breakfast club programme run by caregiver volunteers. When the school closes, how do I know there will be something similar in my child's new school?*

You should talk with the Principal at your child's new school - they may already have a programme or be planning to introduce one. You could also talk with the parent volunteers in the closing school about the possibility of developing a similar programme in the child's new school.

34. *What about the Kiwi Can programme which has been a big success in my child's school. Will it exist in a new school?*

You could talk with the Principals at your child's current and future school about their plans to make this programme available.

35. *What will happen to the school's sports team when the school closes?*

Talk to the principal of your child's new school about sports and how newly enrolled children can participate.

36. *My child has had access to after school activities and/or after school care? What will happen to this programme when this school closes?*

You should talk to the principal or Board members of your child's new school - if there is demand, the Board may be interested in establishing an out of school programme. Alternatively there may be community run programmes operating in your area – check with other parents.

37. *We bought new school uniforms for our children last year and now their school is closing. We can't afford to replace them.*

If you need to enrol your child in a different school, you should talk with the Principal and see what may be available to help families in your situation.

38. *Can schools use EDI funding to buy or subsidise the cost of buying uniforms?*

EDI funding can be used to subsidise the design and/or purchase of uniforms if receiving schools or the newly established school consider that is the best way to use the funding to support students and their families with the transition.

It is the role of the board of the next school that the students enrol in that oversees their uniform requirements.

39. *Can closing schools subsidise uniforms at all?*

If the school has funding in trust accounts, fund raising accounts, or parent body accounts, they can use it to help families purchase uniforms for the schools their students are going to attend next. The school should talk with their change manager or specialist senior advisor to work out how to make this happen.

40. What if my school can't help pay for uniforms and I can't afford to buy a new one?

You should talk with your schools to find out about the various ways families can be supported, including one or more of:

- applying for community funding to subsidise uniforms
- allowing students to continue to wear the uniform of their old school until the child outgrows it and/or families can afford to replace it
- allowing students to purchase and wear part of the receiving or new school's uniform (eg jersey, skirt) until families can afford to purchase the rest
- doing a drive for second hand uniforms from past and current students and families
- phasing in the uniform in the newly merged school so students don't need to wear the new uniform for a specific period – for example, in their last two years at school.