

The future shape of the greater Christchurch Special Schools Network

Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to questions we have received during consultation on the future provision of special education in greater Christchurch. This is a 'living document' and will be updated as more questions arise.

*More information can be found in the full **Education Report: The future shape of the greater Christchurch Special Schools Network**, available online at: www.shapingeducation.org.nz*

Why is the timeframe for consultation so short?

The government is investing \$1.137 billion in education renewal in greater Christchurch. This provides a timely and unique opportunity to consider the region's current special education provision with a view to designing a network that best serves our community.

It is important to note that engagement has been occurring with the sector over the past 12 months. Feedback from that process was incorporated into the Education Report: The future shape of the greater Christchurch Special Schools Network, which was released by the Minister in May.

This current engagement process is simply a further and final opportunity for the sector and community to have influence on the design of the special education network within the greater Christchurch Education Renewal Programme.

What is the scope of this engagement; what are we actually discussing?

The Government's 2010 review of Special Education confirmed the ongoing need for the provision of a continuum of special education provision. This engagement process builds on that work.

We are engaging on two interrelated issues: where special schools could be co-located; and where satellites could be co-located. We are **NOT** reviewing whether special schools are needed in the network, nor any other aspects of their operation.

The end goal of this engagement process is to create a modern, special schooling network in greater Christchurch that improves equitable access to the network, enhances inclusive practice and supports the success of all students with special education needs.

Do the proposals in the Education Report indicate a reduction in the special school network?

No - there is no proposal or intent to change capacity in the special schooling network in greater Christchurch.

Why do we need to be relocated to a new site?

We have an opportunity to develop our special education network by design, and to have it aligned with the wider school network. By doing so, we will create a modern, fit-for-purpose network that increases access and equity for students with special education needs.



The current locations of special schools and their existing network of satellites may not be well positioned to achieve this.

What are the benefits of co-locating base schools with a regular school?

There is a unique opportunity given the current situation in Christchurch to consider a reorganisation of the special school network.

The proposed relocation and co-location of special schools with regular schools has a number of benefits for special schools and satellite hosts.

It locates specialist provision for students with special education needs closer to their local communities.

It supports the development of inclusive practices and the sharing of specialist teaching knowledge across the education network as closer partnerships are developed between the co-located schools, and with other schools in the local community.

In addition it also supports the development of flexible, individualised learning pathways for all students with special education needs.

Will co-location mean we lose our independence or identity?

Special schools will continue to operate as separate entities with their own Boards and Principals; they will continue to complement and provide a genuine alternative to regular schooling.

What are satellite units?

Satellite units are teaching spaces which are governed and managed by the Board of a special school but are located in other regular schools.

Satellite provision supports inclusive practice, both in terms of physical presence, and also by providing specialist learning. In addition they offer social and cultural opportunities for students from both schools where classes, activities and free time may be shared.

Are we able to increase the number of satellites for our school? If we can, does this mean that the number of students in the base school would decrease?

Yes, we are asking the sector and community to consider both current and potential satellite provision. The number of satellites will impact on the base school size.

Why were the proposed co-location sites and new satellites school sites chosen?

We have a unique opportunity in Christchurch as part of the wider education renewal programme, to design a modern special schooling network.

The sites proposed for each base school to be re-located and co-located fall within one of three geographic catchments across greater Christchurch.

Each co-located school would serve as a base from which satellite provision and itinerant specialist teaching would extend across clusters of schools within each catchment.

As well as supporting equitable access, the proposal to redistribute special school provision across greater Christchurch will reduce the amount of travel required for many students as provision will be closer to their local communities, meaning they will spend more quality time engaged in education.



Does our school have to move if our community doesn't want it to?

No - the Minister has been very clear that if a school board decides, after talking with their community, that they do not wish to co-locate on a new site, it will not go ahead.

However, we want schools and communities to see this engagement process as a final opportunity to create, by design, a special schooling network that will best serve our community in the future.

Will new special education facilities (satellites) be built on the new Aranui and Rolleston school sites if we don't co-locate there?

Yes, the Ministry's view is that there is a need for special education provision in these areas and there is a need to build new special education facilities alongside these new schools.

What happens next if we decide to co-locate on a new site?

Following advice to the Minister, an implementation plan would identify the next steps. This plan would include transition plans and implications (including grand-parenting enrolments) and a property programme and would be managed by the Ministry in partnership with the schools.

Is there enough space on the Aranui campus and Rolleston and West Rolleston sites to accommodate the base schools?

Yes, there is plenty of space on all three proposed sites to accommodate new base schools.

