



12 June 2015

Coralanne Child,
Director of Education
Ministry of Education
P O Box 2522
Christchurch 8140

Dear Coralanne

On behalf of the van Asch and Kelston Deaf Education Centres Combined Board of Trustees I wish to give feedback on your proposal to close Redcliffs School in August 2016.

As you are aware, Redcliffs School relocated to the van Asch DEC site on 11 August 2011 following a three-week notice period. The van Asch Board at that time was asked to support this interim arrangement to enable Redcliffs School to stay open while decisions were being made on their safe return to the Redcliffs suburb. This arrangement was extended term by term from August 2011 until December 2012. The arrangement was then extended year by year.

When Redcliffs School first came onto the site, considerable space was made available for their school. All 5 Senior Leaders, 16 Resource teachers of the Deaf, 9 Specialist Resource staff and high school classes vacated their spaces and moved into a Residential House, the main Administration Block and our Media Centre. Our Staffroom and Conference room facilities were also provided as classroom space to Redcliffs School. Over the last four years our Centre has been increasingly compromised for space due to new roles and programmes at the Centre. Since then our residential programmes have returned to normal levels of activity following the earthquakes.

The Board are concerned that at the van Asch site we are unable to plan for adjusting spaces or rebuilding areas that are fit for purpose in relation to the strategic direction of this Regional Centre. For example, Deaf Education is currently planning for new teaching initiatives in relation to the Ministry of Education NZSL@School programme. Our planning for good working space to set up at-distance learning in relation to this exciting initiative to improve NZSL access and skills for Regional deaf students is severely compromised.

Our current staffroom does not have enough seating area – staff are often standing to make space for the many visitors we have on site each week. We requested a shared staffroom space with Redcliffs for 2015 but this was declined.

As van Asch DEC is a Regional Centre we are not impacted by the number of schools that are based in the Port Hills Cluster of Schools. Therefore, the Board does not believe it is our place to express an opinion on whether Redcliffs School should close or not. In the event that Redcliffs School remains on this site beyond August 2016, the Board wishes to advise that current site-sharing arrangements would need to be urgently reviewed and improved.

We also wish to be able to engage with the Ministry of Education in planning for a site that is fit for purpose for the future of services for Deaf Students in the South Island and lower half of the North Island. To ensure best outcomes for Deaf and hard of hearing students in the van Asch Region we cannot afford to wait any longer for this to occur.

Yours faithfully



Bernadette Mulcahy-Bouwman
Principal - van Asch Deaf Education Centre
On behalf of the Combined Board