

# Hon Hekia Parata

Minister of Education



23 March 2015

**Media Statement**

## Consultation initiated over Redcliffs School

Education Minister Hekia Parata has begun consultation with the Board of Trustees of Redcliffs School in Christchurch about the possible closure of the school because of concerns about the long-term safety of the Redcliffs site.

“I know families in this community have already been through a lot and some will be disappointed. The board of trustees has expressed a strong desire for the school to return to Redcliffs. However, after reviewing all of the information and advice provided to me I have decided to begin consultation on possible closure because I am concerned families cannot be given a clear assurance that this will be a safe school site over time. This means children could end up being moved from the site periodically and have their education disrupted each time that happened,” says Ms Parata.

“The expert advice I have been given is that we could make the site safe in the short term. We could reduce the size of the school grounds to keep the children further away from the foot of the cliff, where there is an ongoing danger of rockfalls. We could also build an embankment that would provide a barrier to contain any rocks that fell.

“However, any plan for the school would also need to take into account future rockfalls that could damage the embankment or build up behind the embankment. Future rockfalls could lead to the school having to relocate for periods of time while repairs are carried out, or while a reassessment of the site’s viability for schooling takes place. Ongoing disruption to students’ education is a real possibility.

“The purpose of this period of consultation is to hear the views of the board, parents and community before a decision is made.

“The Ministry of Education will fund a facilitator to assist the community through the consultation process. Submissions close on 1 May 2015. The Ministry will then analyse the submissions and provide advice to me. I will make an interim decision and provide further time for the school to consider my interim decision before I make a final decision.

“I want to thank the board of trustees and staff who have worked hard to maintain a positive school culture and optimistic outlook for its community.”

The school is currently based at a temporary location at the Van Asch Deaf Education Centre in Sumner and the proposed closure would be effective from July 2016.

”I want to make a decision that is in the best interests of the children in this community.”

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***Note to editors:***

The Education Report containing the Ministry of Education’s advice to the Minister about Redcliffs School is available on the Ministry’s [website](#)