



Office of Hon Hekia Parata

Minister of Education

1 November 2016

Tēnā koe Parent / Caregiver

I am writing to you as you are the parent/caregiver of a child, or children, at Redcliffs School, and I wanted to let you know about my decision for the school.

As you will be aware, the school's Board of Trustees has been working closely with the Ministry of Education over the past few months to support investigations into two matters:

- a further investigation into the potential psychosocial implications for children attending school at the Main Road site with the proposed mitigation measures in place; and
- a feasibility analysis on whether relocation within a suitable timeframe to another site within the Redcliffs community is likely to be a realistic option.

The Board, as representatives of your school community, has put a lot of time and effort into assisting with this work, and I am very grateful to them for this.

Following my consideration of all of the advice and information that I have received, including the views put forward by the Board, I have decided that relocating Redcliffs School to Redcliffs Park is the best option for the school's future.

Psychosocial investigation

The Board worked with the Ministry to develop a scope for investigating the potential psychosocial implications for children of attending school at the Main Road site, and helped to select four psychosocial experts to provide their opinions on this. The Board assisted with a briefing and site visit for the experts to ensure they had all the information that they needed to base their opinions on.

The general view of the experts is that psychosocial issues relating to the Main Road site can be managed for most children, although the school would need to have ongoing communication and support strategies in place.

While I appreciate the commitment that the present Board and members of the current school community have to the school's former site, I need to consider the additional responsibilities that this would place on all Redcliffs School families, staff and Board members into the future.

Relocation

The Board raised the possibility of relocation in its March 2016 submission to me, and I agreed that the feasibility of relocation should be further explored. I considered that the possibility of an alternative site for the school was worth looking into, as it could mean the school wouldn't have to compromise its space, and that it wouldn't have to manage the ongoing risks posed by the cliffs.

The Board was also closely involved with the Ministry's work to analyse the feasibility of relocation. Based on the information gathered through an in-depth assessment process I decided that steps should now be taken towards acquiring Redcliffs Park so that the school can be relocated there.

Relocation to Redcliffs Park will provide a larger site for the school, and it will be better able to accommodate future roll growth. I am also interested in the opportunities this will provide for exploring co-located and shared community facilities.

A location can be selected on Redcliffs Park that would not require any rockfall mitigation works. This will remove the requirement for the mitigation measures that had been recommended for the Main Road site, and the associated ongoing management of these measures. It would also eliminate the need for ongoing mitigation of the potential psychosocial effects on children identified by the expert advisors.

Next steps for the Ministry

The Ministry will now work with experts to carry out the required due diligence on Redcliffs Park, which will identify the best placement for school infrastructure and buildings on the site.

The Ministry will also be working with the Christchurch City Council to develop a process for the acquisition of Redcliffs Park. The relocation to the Park will be dependent on the successful acquisition of the site. In order to keep all options open in case this could not progress for any reason, the Main Road site will be retained until there is certainty about this.

Next steps for the school community

The Ministry and the Board will be working together to develop an engagement process to gain the community's input into developing the plan for the relocated school. Relocation of the school will be a major investment in the Redcliffs community. Planning for this will be an opportunity for the community to come together and consider its priorities and aspirations for the current and future children of Redcliffs. I hope that as many of you as possible will take the time to be part of this exciting work.

At this stage, it's considered likely that construction of the relocated school would commence in mid-2018, and the school would be able to open on its new site in Term 3, 2019. The Ministry will also be exploring whether there are ways that this could happen sooner.

In the meantime, the school will continue to operate under its current arrangements at van Asch Deaf Education Centre, and I have asked the Ministry to keep working with both schools to make sure they're well supported through these arrangements.

Further information

The school's Board has further information about my decision, and this will also be available on the Ministry's Shaping Education website www.shapingeducation.govt.nz.

Heoi anō



Hon Hekia Parata
Minister of Education