

Parent/Caregiver/Whānau Information Update



Wednesday 20 March 2024

Two of Burnside High Schools' classroom blocks, I and J block, will close after the school's board received draft detailed seismic assessments revealing that both buildings are below the minimum level of earthquake rating required under the New Building Standard (NBS).

Consequently, the whole school will close on Thursday March 21 and Friday March 22 to allow time to reconfigure the school and then reopen on Monday March 25 with new timetables and teaching locations.

We appreciate that this is very short notice and will be disruptive for some families, but the school's priority is the safety of our staff and students.

Our staff have been busy working on the accommodation plan for our students given I and J block consist of 24 classrooms – nearly a quarter of our teaching spaces.

Why are we closing I and J block?

As part of assessing weather-tightness issues for I and J block, the Ministry of Education contracted engineering consultancy BECA to undertake detailed seismic assessments of both buildings.

Both I and J block were assessed in 2014 and rated 50% NBS (Block I) and 57% NBS (Block J). However, in 2017 the introduction of new National Seismic Assessment Guidelines meant buildings must now be above an earthquake rating of 34% NBS.

The Ministry has received draft seismic assessment reports from BECA that show I and J block are 15%NBS, both below the minimum earthquake rating level.

The Ministry of Education have said that I and J blocks could stay open in the short term until our students and staff move to our new Pukehinau Block in July. However, based on the school's risk assessment and the wellbeing of staff and students we have made the decision to close I and J block while their future use is being decided.

The Ministry supports this decision.

The Board's decision to close its buildings mirrors the decision made by Lincoln High School in 2021. Their board also closed their affected classrooms after receiving the same NBS rating.

What is an earthquake-prone building?

Earthquake-prone buildings are defined in section 133AB of the Building Act 2004 as buildings whose ultimate capacity will be exceeded in a moderate earthquake and, if it were to collapse, would likely result in injury or death, or damage to another property.

Because the earthquake rating for both blocks is now 15% NBS that means both blocks are now classed as Grade E buildings under the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering grading scheme.

Grade E buildings represent a life-safety risk to occupants more than 25 times that expected for a similar new building, indicating a very high relative seismic risk compared with a similar new building. We are not prepared to take any risks around the safety of our students and staff.

Putting safety first

We know that once an earthquake prone building sticker goes onto I and J block, many of our parents would not want their children going into those buildings and would likely withdraw them from these classes.

We did not want to ask our students or staff to work from buildings that are Grade E buildings. This would have potentially been very stressful for them and could have impacted on students' learning outcomes.

What happens now?

There are three weeks until the end of term and during this time we will roster one year level per day to study from home. Given some of our Year 9 students are not 14, and can't be home on their own, this will not apply to Year 9 – they will be at school all days until the end of term.

Rostering students at home is necessary in the short term to enable the school to develop a new timetable without the use of I and J block.

When our students return from the term vacation at the start of Term 2 we will split the school day into two sessions – juniors will come earlier, with seniors coming later. We know this will not work for all students and families and where there are problems or clashes, we will work with each student and their family/caregiver individually.

Our new Pukehinau Block is scheduled to open by July this year and, once open, we will be able to use that space to go back to a normal timetable.

Our goal is to minimise disruption to student learning. We have very resilient students at Burnside, and we learnt many lessons during Covid about how to manage offsite and online learning.

continued overleaf...

Specific details

EXPECTATIONS FOR THURSDAY 21 AND FRIDAY 22 MARCH

Timetabled classes are not able to occur on these days while we withdraw from I and J block and reconfigure the school to operate without these spaces.

Students are asked to engage in self-directed learning on these days.

Our online learning platform is *Schoology*, students are very familiar with the use of this platform.

While no new learning will be posted here on Thursday and Friday, students are encouraged to check they are up to date with learning that is already on *Schoology*.

A device and internet connection survey was completed earlier this year and the vast majority of our students indicated having access to the internet at home and access to a device.

We understand that some students may not be able to undertake online learning at home or some families may not be able to make alternative arrangements at short notice.

Limited supervision will be available for students under the age of 14 where alternative arrangements cannot be made, or those who do not have devices at home.

Students can be supplied with school devices to use onsite if required.

Parents are asked to email their students' Dean to advise that supervision will be required.

ROSTERING HOME - WEEKS 9, 10, 11

The safety of students and staff has been a priority throughout this decision-making process, however we remain highly committed to our excellent teaching and learning programmes and we are confident that this short period of rostering home affords us the time to develop a school timetable that enables the whole school to return to a full programme of on-site teaching from Term 2.

It has been necessary to roster a year level home per day in these initial stages because I and J block contain 24 classrooms and more than 40 teacher workspaces. This represents close to 25% of our total number of classrooms. This period of rostering home will enable us to reconfigure a number of spaces into usable classrooms and

Rostering Home Schedule

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
8B	18/3	19/3	20/3	21/3 CLOSED for teaching	22/3 CLOSED for teaching
9A	25/3 Yr 13 rostered home	26/3 Yr 12 rostered home	27/3 Yr 11 rostered home	28/3 Yr 10 rostered home	29/3 CLOSED Easter Friday
10B	01/4 CLOSED Easter Monday	02/4 CLOSED Easter Tuesday	03/4 Yr 11 rostered home	04/4 Yr 10 rostered home	05/4 Yr 12 rostered home
11A	08/4 Yr 13 rostered home	09/4 Yr 12 rostered home	10/4 Yr 11 rostered home	11/4 Yr 10 rostered home	12/4 Yr 13 rostered home

provide us with the time to develop a full timetable.

New timetables for the next three weeks of rostering home will be emailed to students prior to the return to classes on Monday 25 March.

Year 9 students will not be rostered home as some of these students are not 14 and are unable to be at home on their own.

Students with Year 12 Study classes during periods 1 or 5 can study from home during this period. This allows us to free up classroom space for taught lessons.

Guidance for students being rostered home:

- Teachers will be posting learning activities on *Schoology* for students to undertake when they are rostered home. This learning will be for the classes that the students would miss on that day.
- If students do not have access to a device at home and/or do not have internet access they should let their Deans know as soon as possible so that alternative learning can be arranged.
- Further information about our remote learning approach will be placed on our website.
- Sport, cultural and co-curricular activities will continue as normal, even for those year levels rostered home.
- Most field trips and other off-site activities will continue unless communicated by staff.

- Please ask your teen to check their new timetables carefully as many classes may now be in different classrooms throughout the week.

TERM 2

In order to return to a full programme of teaching with the continued lack of available teaching spaces, we will need to operate a split timetable for the term. Junior students will start school at 8.15am and will finish their day at 1.25pm. Senior Students will start school at 10.15am and will finish at 3.20pm. The final structure of the timetable is still being worked on.

We recognise that the change in the timetable schedule will have impacts for some students and families with commitments beyond school.

We apologise for the inconvenience that this may cause and aim to provide you with as much notice as possible, bearing in mind that the timetable has yet to be developed.

Further information regarding the timetable in Term 2 will be shared as soon as it is developed. Thanks in advance for your understanding.

TERM 3

At the start of Term 3, we look forward to the opening of our new 24 classroom Technology and Science block, Pukehinau. This will provide the additional teaching spaces required for us to return to our normal timetable.

One thing parents and students can be assured of is that the exceptional educational outcomes that Burnside High School is renowned for will not change. We are proud of our reputation as one of New Zealand's leading secondary schools and that is not due to our buildings, but because of our incredibly talented teaching staff.