

## Consultation on the Future of Westbridge Residential School

### Proposal

The Ministry of Education is seeking feedback on a proposal, by the Minister, to **close Westbridge Residential School**. This follows concerns raised by the Education Review Office (ERO) pertaining to the school's ability to provide a safe and effective learning environment for students with complex needs.

Under the *Education and Training Act 2020*, the Minister of Education may close a specialist school if dissatisfied with the manner in which it is being conducted. As part of this process, we are consulting with the school, the school community, the boards of schools whose rolls may be affected, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Enrolments at Westbridge Residential School remain open for consideration during the consultation period.

### Why is Closure Being Considered?

Westbridge Residential School provides education for students aged 9–15 with highly complex behavioural and social needs. Despite ongoing interventions and governance support, significant concerns remain regarding the ongoing health and safety of students and the quality of education that is provided at the school.

ERO's latest report whilst acknowledging improvements, highlights the concerns above and recommends closure. The Ministry agrees that these issues raise serious questions about the school's ability to meet its obligations as outlined in the Education Report linked below.

### How to Have Your Say

**You can provide take part in the consultation by:**

- Emailing: [consultation.westbridge@education.govt.nz](mailto:consultation.westbridge@education.govt.nz)
- **Deadline for submissions:** 5pm Sunday 15 March 2026

All submissions will be considered as part of the decision-making process and provided to the Minister to support her decision.

**Your views are important. Please share your feedback before the deadline.**

## **Next Steps Following Consultation**

- 1. Minister's Consideration** – The Minister will decide whether to proceed with closure or not.
- 2. Further Consultation (if required)** – If the Minister decides to proceed with the proposed closure, the Commissioner will be given 28 days to provide any further information.
- 3. Final Decision** – The Minister will announce the decision and, if closure proceeds, the Ministry will manage transitions for students and staff.

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### **What happens if Westbridge is to close?**

- The Ministry will follow its usual process for school closure.
- Current students already have personalised transition plans to return other education settings.
- The Ministry will work with whānau and receiving schools to put appropriate supports in place.

### **What happens should the Minister decide for Westbridge to remain open?**

- The Ministry will continue to support the Commissioner/School Board to improve processes in order to provide a safe and inclusive education environment for all students.

### **Supporting Information**

[Westbridge Residential School developmental evaluation report](#)

[Consideration of the future of Westbridge Residential School](#)