

Maitland Grossmann High School

Community Update | 27 May 2024

Dear staff and parents/carers,

Thank you for your patience and understanding with the recent changes to the school learning environment. We know that movement and access around the school has been challenging, and it takes a long time to travel around the perimeter to move from room to room. We acknowledge the inconvenience and appreciate your resilience in adapting to the changes in routine.

Following on from the works notification issued on 28 April 2024, Building E at Maitland Grossmann High School remains closed after friable asbestos material was found in a small hole in the ceiling void during a routine inspection. Friable asbestos can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to a powder by hand pressure.

We are continuing to investigate the future of Building E and are receiving advice from the independent hygienist on next steps.

Measures in place so far

Before the building was isolated in the April school holidays, an independent hygienist confirmed with testing that friable asbestos was present inside the ceiling cavity in Building E. To date the following control measures have been completed:

- Building E was encapsulated outside of school hours over the recent April school holiday period and a Remediation Action Plan (RAP) is being drafted. Encapsulation occurs to minimise current and potential future exposure.
- As an extra precautionary measure fencing has been installed around Building E with air monitoring in place to create an exclusion zone from the encapsulation works.
- A full environmental clean has been completed and a clearance certificate was issued from the independent hygienist to the school to continue using all other buildings.

For added assurance SafeWork NSW attended the site on Monday 29 April 2024 and is satisfied with all measures put in place to protect the health and safety of our staff, students, and community.

Air monitoring

All air monitoring results to date across the whole school site has returned results below the minimum detectable limit, which means it is consistent with acceptable levels in ambient air (i.e. <0.01 fibres/mL) as per SafeWork NSW guidelines.

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Further testing

Internal investigations are currently taking place in Building E as recommended by the independent hygienist. This type of testing requires drilling inside the building, enabling samples to be taken away for testing. This is occurring under controlled conditions, with Building E already encapsulated and air monitoring in place. We will update you when the testing report is available.

Building E will remain closed until further notice

We are working closely with the independent hygienist and a structural engineer through the development of the RAP to confirm the extent of work required to remediate Building E. The building will remain isolated from students and staff until these details are confirmed.

As a precaution the independent hygienist has advised that personal belongings, including teaching and learning resources and equipment inside the building will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Due to contamination precautions, items such as books, computers, fabrics and anything of a porous nature cannot be recovered.

Additional classroom spaces

Arrangements have been made to prevent disruption to student learning.

Additional classroom spaces are being prepared. These will provide specialist science laboratories, general learning spaces, staff study accommodation and additional temporary student toilets.

As of 23 May, all 21 of these additional demountable buildings have arrived at the school and will provide:

- 14 general learning spaces (classrooms)
- 2 science lab learning spaces
- 1 toilet block – boys, girls and staff
- 2 staff spaces
- 2 storage containers for general assistant storage.

It is expected that these additional spaces will be ready to use later this term.

There will be a change for the drama teaching space, which will be moved to another classroom. The current drama teaching space will be used for STEM.

Commercial kitchen

We are currently looking into the best options for an alternative commercial kitchen learning space to be used by hospitality students. We will update the school community once this alternative space is confirmed.

Thank you to our community

The health, safety, and wellbeing of the school and the local community is our highest priority.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during these changes. We appreciate our school staff, students and families for their flexibility and support.

We will make sure to keep you updated.

More information

For more information about asbestos please refer NSW Health's [Asbestos and health risks fact sheet](#).

If you have concerns, further advice about the health risks of asbestos can be obtained by speaking with your GP or from your local public health unit by phoning 1300 066 055.

Individuals concerned about exposure can also record their details on the National Asbestos Exposure Register. The register is managed by the Australian Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency, which was created so that members of the community who think that they may have been exposed to asbestos can record the details of their exposure for their future reference. If you have any questions regarding the register or would like to speak to someone at the Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency, please call 1300 326 148.

If you have further questions, department representatives from School Infrastructure and Public Schools, as well as the independent hygienist, will attend the next school P & C meeting on Thursday 13 June 2024.