

Fort Street High School

Works notification | 22 July 2024

Dear staff, parents and carers,

Following our [notification on Tuesday 2 July](#), we are providing you with updated information regarding fragments of asbestos-containing material found at Fort Street High School. Unfortunately due to a communication breakdown, the date of the initial independent hygienist visit and testing was incorrect. Please see below for correction.

Initial find and actions

On Tuesday 4 June, during a routine inspection following heavy rain, fragments of cement material suspected to contain asbestos were found in the grass on the eastern side of the school, near Andreas Street. The area was fenced off and made out of bounds.

The fragments were removed by an independent hygienist for testing on Tuesday 11 June, not on Friday 21 June as previously notified.

Test results were received on Thursday 13 June and confirmed the fragments contained bonded asbestos. This means they are attached to other materials, such as tiles or cement, and cannot be crumbled by light pressure.

NSW Health explains that if bonded asbestos is mixed with cement or other hard bonding materials, and in good condition, it is likely to be low-risk.

Fort Street High School has a site-specific asbestos management plan for known asbestos in-ground. As part of ongoing management under this plan, inspections are required following heavy rain. The fragments were found in an area listed on this plan.

The area was inspected by the independent hygienist to confirm it had been fully remediated, and a clearance certificate issued before the area was reopened.

More finds following heavy rain

On Monday 17 June, following more heavy rain, additional fragments were found in the same area. The area was fenced off and made out of bounds. Work to remove the fragments was done on Friday 21 June.

Further fragments were found in the same area on Monday 24 June, also after heavy rain. Work to remove the fragments was done on Saturday 29 June.

Following these events, the area was sprayed with fibro seal and covered with geo fabric to contain the fragments until further testing could be done. The area remains fenced off and out of bounds.



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Additional work and ongoing safety measures

On 17-19 July, soil samples were removed by a licensed and accredited asbestos contractor for further testing, with air monitoring in place.

Air monitoring across the site 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.

Once the results from the soil samples are received, we will work with the independent hygienist to develop a plan to manage the in-ground asbestos.

All work will continue to be done outside of school hours, in accordance with work, health and safety laws and the NSW Department of Education's Asbestos Management Plan. Safety measures will be in place while work is being done. All work will be completed by licensed and accredited asbestos contractors and monitored by independent hygienists in strict accordance with all applicable legislation, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

The health, safety and wellbeing of the school and the local community are our highest priority. We will keep the community updated.

Thank you for your cooperation during this important work.