

FOR RELEASE
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Update on schools following seismic activity

A structural engineer assessed Ross River School on Wednesday and determined the building is safe for occupancy following Monday's earthquakes. All Yukon schools are now open.

Early Monday morning, all school principals were directed to inspect their schools for damage and report back to the Department of Education. Available property management and security staff were also directed to look for any damage to school buildings.

Two schools, Ross River and Elijah Smith Elementary, were closed as a precaution until they could be inspected by a structural engineer. Elijah Smith reopened Tuesday.

To ensure the safety of students and staff, and given known structural concerns associated with melting permafrost, Ross River School required an external engineer familiar with the building to complete an inspection before it could open. The school was declared safe early Thursday morning.

Whitehorse Elementary School and Tantalus School in Carmacks have also been assessed as a precaution and are safe for occupancy.

Quotes

"We appreciate the hard work of our structural engineers to quickly assess and report back to us on the structural integrity of the affected schools. The health and safety of government facilities, including schools, are a number one priority for our department and we will continue with our work to ensure these buildings are safe for students and staff."

–Minister of Highways and Public Works Richard Mostyn

"Thanks to the school principals, staff and security personnel for their quick response to Monday's earthquakes, as well as to the engineers and tradespeople who inspected Yukon's schools and provided such prompt service to make sure schools are safe for kids and staff."

–Minister of Education Tracy-Anne McPhee

Quick facts

- All of Yukon's schools have emergency plans to guide members of staff so that our students, teachers and other school staff are safe.
- As we invest in our schools, we ensure that the risks posed by seismic activity are addressed.
- Ross River School is built on permafrost and the building is monitored regularly for shifting. The school was closed for repairs due to shifting foundations from January to September, 2015.
- The school foundations are assessed twice per year, and any time a significant shift is noticed in the building.

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