



Solar on schools QAs

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) August 2026

Why are schools receiving solar panels?

Solar panels for schools reduce energy costs, increase energy independence, reduce carbon emissions and advance renewable energy in New Zealand communities.

How was school eligibility for the programme determined?

The programme has prioritised schools that:

- are experiencing energy or fuel insecurity
- are facing higher energy costs
- are scheduled for gas or diesel boiler replacements
- have a need for greater energy resilience.

Does being eligible guarantee our school will receive solar panels?

No. Eligibility is subject to confirmation of site suitability and site-by-site cost-benefit analysis before work proceeds.

Will our school need to pay for the solar installation?

No. Schools do not need to make a financial contribution to participate in the Solar on schools programme.

When will our on-site assessment occur?

We expect Planning and Design Contracts to be awarded in December 2026; site assessments will be scheduled from that date. We will continue to keep eligible schools informed and supported by providing updates and information as the programme progresses.

What if our school isn't on the list?

Schools that are not part of the Solar on schools programme can still choose to install solar panels independently. Information and guidance is available here: [Solar panels at school – New Zealand School Property Agency](#). Schools are encouraged to reach out to their School Property team with any questions.

What are the estimated savings from the programme?

Savings will vary between schools depending on energy use and system size and whether the system includes energy management and/or a battery.

Will schools receive batteries as well as solar panels?

Some schools may receive batteries in addition to solar panels. Batteries will be prioritised for schools where they provide the greatest benefits, such as addressing local electricity network constraints, improve energy resilience or support communities during outages.

What are energy management systems?

Energy management systems help schools monitor and manage how and when they use electricity. These systems can help schools make better use of the energy generated by their solar panels and further reduce electricity costs. Up to 150 schools are expected to receive an energy management system through the programme.

Can our school expand the system in the future?

Yes. Schools may have opportunities to increase the size of their solar system, battery storage or energy management capability at their own cost. Systems installed through the programme will be configured to allow future upgrades and add-ons.

What if our school is already exploring solar or has received an offer from a solar provider?

Schools can choose whether to participate in the Solar on schools programme or proceed with their own solar arrangements. Some schools may decide to continue with an existing commercial proposal if it better meets their needs, such as providing a larger solar system. Participation in the programme is voluntary, and schools can consider the options available to determine the best outcome for their circumstances.

If this means schools save money on operating costs because they're generating their own power, what will happen with that money?

We anticipate energy savings will cover all capital and operating costs, including maintenance. Additional savings can be redirected to other school priorities.