



Out with the old, in with the new: Invercargill Middle School upgrades their bell system

Case Study

Invercargill Middle School
www.middle.school.nz/

About the School

Invercargill Middle School is situated in the heart of Invercargill and is one of the oldest schools in the area. With just under 150 students from years 0 – 6, the school has a proud history and tradition of providing quality education.

Summary

With an aging bell system that meant teachers had to manually connect to Bluetooth speakers and remember to play the bell, Invercargill Middle School decided it was time to install an upgraded bell system that could be integrated with PA functions for a more efficient system.

A Number of Challenges

Before New Era, Invercargill Middle School used Bluetooth speakers as their bells. Although students loved having music played as their bells, the Bluetooth speakers were not practical. Sarah Reed, Principal of Invercargill Middle School, says speakers had to be charged regularly, teachers had to connect to the speakers from their devices manually and had to keep an eye on the time to know when to play the music. Even then, the music was not heard everywhere around the school, so each room had to have one. Other issues were that it was difficult to hear when kids were outdoors and ongoing connectivity issues with the speakers.

A Flexible Solution

Invercargill Middle school decided it was time for an upgrade, so they reached out when they saw that New Era helped schools with PA and bell systems. Speaking to New Era's Account Executives, Invercargill Middle School knew they needed support beyond just the speakers and chose New Era as their partner to assist with some of their ICT support. The managed service for Invercargill Middle School included full remote support and an assigned Account Executive that could help them with any ICT-related queries.

Invercargill Middle School brought their bell system issues to New Era's Account Executives, and the discussion for a new system began.

The school's leadership team wanted to modernise its bell system, including integrating a PA system so they could efficiently address individual classrooms or the entire school. The new solution needed to be flexible and customisable to meet the school's needs today and for years to come.

New Era recommended the 2N speakers and paging system. This IP-based paging system allows important information and messages to be broadcast everywhere, at any time, and with an easy-to-use central control interface.

Instead of manually downloading songs and then playing them via a Bluetooth speaker, the 2N interface manages the bell schedule. Music can be automatically scheduled and played anywhere in the school, at any time. In addition, the system can trigger lockdown and alarms - a function the school never had before.

Paging and Bell System

- Server-less paging
- Pre-recorded announcements
- Easy installation
- Lockdown functions
- Connect to VoIP system

"The automaticity of it is fantastic."

Sarah Reed, Principal of Invercargill Middle School

Easy Process, with a Big Impact

Once the decision had been made to get the new bell and PA system, the process was "seamless and easy," said Principal Reed.

New Era worked in conjunction with electricians who installed the speakers and sound system company, Edwards, who configured the system remotely. The whole process took about a week to complete.

After the speakers were installed, New Era Account Executives trained the staff to use the system.

“The New Era team were good at answering questions and explaining how it all works and what would be best for what the school wanted to do,” commented Principal Reed.

Upgrading the paging and bell system has significantly improved the experience for teachers, students, and the wider community. Principal Reed stated that the new system has “been really useful.”

With a speaker in every classroom, staff room, office, and four or five outdoor horns for the playground, staff and students can hear the bell from anywhere on campus. Teachers no longer have to worry about checking the time to see when they have to play the bell. Instead, they can focus on teaching and have the bell automatically play when the class ends.

It is now easier than ever to send out communication during class time. With the new PA system, staff can make announcements to the whole school or specific zones. For example, a message for a student during lunchtime could be transmitted just to the outdoor area.

New Era’s Account Executive Kemp Reynolds also outlined that the kids have engaged with the new bell system.

“The song changes each term; you can hear the kids singing the songs at the end of interval,” said Reynolds.

The new PA and bell system has positively impacted the Invercargill Middle School community. It has been a great way to deliver significantly more communication functionality with less manual labour for the staff.



The system is easy to use and we really love it.”

Sarah Reed, Principal of Invercargill Middle School