

## Island students unaware of wave

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Malolo Public School students on the beach to farewell guests who visited the island.

AS schools around the country were vacated and students sent home for their safety last Wednesday, Malolo District School students were unaware of the tsunami alert that was in place for the Fiji Group.

The students were part of a two-day exchange program with Newport Public School students from Australia and were performing a welcome ceremony when news of the tsunami warning was received.

But the day's activities went on unhindered. The school is approximately 30 metres from the beach.

Headteacher Eminoni Taka said students were aware of the strategy they had been taught to follow in the event of a tsunami.

"In times of natural disasters, we are very fortunate that the resort alerts us.

The school does have a strategy when a tsunami warning is in place.

"Students are aware that they need to run up to the nearby hills, which takes about 20 minutes to get to the top," he said.

Mr Taka said he also listened to the radio for reports and evacuated students based on the information he heard from radio reports.

"Luckily the tsunami warning was cancelled and students didn't have to go home," he said.

The Ministry of Education said it was the role of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to alert schools and the public during natural disasters.

NDMO acting director Aisea Quminakelo confirmed it was their responsibility and said they relied mostly on radio to relay alerts.

"In last week's case, what needs to be understood is that an earthquake has no alert sign and no one can detect it because it occurs unexpectedly. We issue alerts through the radio and we take it that outer islands are equipped with radios so they will also receive the alerts," he said.