



Reinforced Autoclaves Aerated Concrete (RAAC) BWCET TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Harlow Green

28 September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust is committed, first and foremost, to ensuring the safety of its staff and pupils and is taking proactive and extensive steps to address this challenging issue, while continuing to deliver education to pupils affected to the very best of its ability. Our schools and teachers are amazing and are busy dedicating their efforts to ensuring that education will continue. Our children remain our absolute priority.

At the beginning of this term, the DfE instructed the Trust that three schools should remain closed. This was due to the change in DfE guidance surrounding schools with RAAC present in their building construction. The Trust were advised that neither staff nor pupils could return to affected schools/classrooms and alternative arrangements must be made for all pupils and staff for the foreseeable future. At that point, the Trust, Headteachers and staff in school contacted parents to advise of the immediate closure. The unexpected, no-notice disruption for St Anne's pupils, their families and staff was unavoidable following the change in guidance.

A Task Force Team made up of School Leadership, Trust Leaders, the DfE and Local Authority have been working hard ever since the official notification to put the most appropriate and safe options into place for hosting all pupils face-to-face with their teachers as quickly as possible. The Task Force meets every day to discuss the progress being made towards full-time face-to-face education for all pupils. This has required a considerable amount of planning with our pupils' safety being the most important consideration in this process. The urgency of having all our pupils back together, must be managed simultaneously with our duty to explore several options including the occupancy of viable alternative premises at Cleveland Hall, Eighton Banks Community Centre, more recently St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, as well as the use of temporary teaching/mobile accommodation. Whilst we are desperate to get the whole school community back together, we will not relent on our duty to ensure safeguarding is paramount.

We know that the Executive Headteacher, Mrs Stokoe, has written to all parents with the latest position, but we wanted to ensure that we also provide a formal response.

We are delighted that all St Anne's children have been back to full-time face-to-face education. I'm sure you can understand and appreciate the enormity of the challenge the school and Trust have faced to ensure the availability and suitability of appropriate

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venues.

Hopefully, as parents, you will feel reassured that all the necessary safeguarding and health and safety risks have been considered and adhered to. The school have provided access to the relevant risk assessments for each venue.

This has been a very difficult time for all of us. We hope that you know that everyone at St Anne’s and Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, are doing all that we can and will continue to do so, to provide face-to-face education in the best possible way.

Thank you for your continued support, patience and understanding.

Very best wishes,
Mr Nick Hurn OBE
Chief Executive Officer

RAAC Questions & Response

There have been a few questions raised and we have therefore formalised responses and will add to this as more questions are raised.

Q1	Has a surveyor been out to assess the site.
A1	A technical surveyor has visited the school to assess the full extent of the situation.
Q2	If the answer to the above is yes, what is the extent of the damage.
A2	The Trust has been informed that there is RAAC present in all the roofs except the Pre-School and the front porch of the school building.
Q3	What is the short, medium and long-term plans for St Anne’s.
A3	<p>Short Term Currently the Pre-School children are in a RAAC free part of the school site. For the last few weeks Reception, Y1 and 2 have been transported to Eighton Banks Village Hall and Y3 to 6 to Cleveland Hall. From Monday 2 October Reception, Y1 and Y2 will be moving to a space on St Oswald’s school site. More information regarding this change is included in Mrs Stokoe’s update to parents. Although we appreciate that this is not ideal, we are grateful for the support of the staff at St Oswald’s Catholic Primary School, Eighton Banks Village Hall and Cleveland Hall.</p> <p>Medium Term We continue to have very limited access to the school building and are awaiting a decision from the DfE as to the future of the building. Giving due consideration to the extent of RAAC and whether it can be made safe or not, our medium-term aim is to get the whole school community back together. On this basis and having considered all options available, the Trust Task Force, have made the decision that Reception, Y1 and Y2 will continue to use the space at St Oswald’s until the end of term. The Trust has also made the</p>

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	<p>decision to appropriately refurbish Cleveland Hall to continue to accommodate Y3 through to Y6. We believe this can be completed to provide an effective education site from the 30 October for the remainder of this term.</p> <p>Long Term We appreciate that you are concerned about the long-term future of St Anne's. The Trust is committed to working with the Local Governing Committee and the DfE to ensure that St Anne's continues to deliver high quality education to its pupils. In terms of the current school building, we are working with the DfE technical advisors to determine future options.</p>
Q4	How long can the children attend the current temporary educational establishments.
A4	We have commitment from Cleveland Hall that we can utilise the site for as long as necessary. We have commitment from St Oswald's that we can use their facilities for the rest of this term. The Trust is fully committed to providing required transport arrangements for the duration.
Q5	What are the alternative strategies if temporary accommodation on site is not feasible.
A5	As explained above, we have commitment from Cleveland Hall for as long as necessary and this will continue to initially accommodate Y3 through to Y6.

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