



ST JAMES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEBBURN

1st September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have seen recent media coverage regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and its use in educational settings. RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete; because it is weaker than regular concrete, concerns have been raised about its long-term durability.

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently changed its guidance to education settings on the management of RAAC to take a more precautionary approach and as a result areas with RAAC will be vacated until safety mitigations are put in place.

I am writing to inform you that a DfE-commissioned survey recently identified that RAAC panels were used in the construction of St James Catholic Primary School buildings. As a result, we have taken the difficult decision to vacate St James Catholic Primary School.

We will therefore be taking the school building out of use while we put safety measures in place. We appreciate the concern this may raise, but the safety of our pupils and our staff is paramount.

We are currently working to finalise alternative arrangements and are looking to make provision for all pupils. We will be in touch on Monday once arrangements have been finalised.

I appreciate that the timing of this decision, shortly before the start of the autumn term, is far from ideal. This decision has been taken out of an abundance of caution to ensure pupil safety and we will be doing all we can ensure that the impact on pupils is kept to a minimum.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Francesca Heslop
Headteacher

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Bishop Chadwick
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