

Valley End C of E (VC) Infant School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you had a lovely summer break and are looking forward to the start of term, next Wednesday. We are really looking forward to welcoming you back for another academic year.

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, they want schools to take a more precautionary approach and as a result areas in affected spaces will be vacated.

The DfE has been helping education settings and responsible bodies (such as local authorities and multi-academy trusts) to identify and manage the potential risks of RAAC since 2018. You can find more in the Education Hub article published by DfE.

We appreciate the concern this may raise, and we will always prioritise the safety of your children and our staff.

We do not have any confirmed RAAC in our buildings and have not been asked to close any areas. However, we want to take care and to be sure, so we are currently working with the DfE to actively check whether RAAC has been used in the construction of any part of our buildings. If RAAC is identified, we will let you know straight away, and we work with the DfE to put contingencies in place.

The change in guidance is precautionary in nature, and only affects education premises where the presence of RAAC has been confirmed. The DfE is offering us access to surveyors who are helping us do these checks quickly.

Any contingency plans will prioritise the continuation of education and ensure that, if RAAC is identified, any impact on children is kept to an absolute minimum. Rest assured that the safety of our children and staff is of paramount importance to all concerned.

We look forward to seeing you next week and will send any updates at the earliest opportunity. Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Harper-Cole

Headteacher