

15th September 2023



Dear parents and carers

Re: Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) – Temporary School Closure

We are sure that many of you will by now be aware of the issues that have been highlighted in a number of schools and other public buildings across the country with regard to parts of their construction using reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), in particular the risks that are posed by its potential to suddenly fail. The Trust promptly commissioned a building surveyor, in line with Department for Education (DfE) advice, to inspect the school this week for RAAC. Unfortunately, RAAC has been identified in specific roofing areas of the original school and we are compelled to follow the most recent DfE guidance that requires schools to close these parts of the site.

Whilst the majority of the school buildings do not have any RAAC, the specific areas of the school that have been identified are on the second floor of the original school building, which has science and geography classrooms (it does not include the rooms on the second floor where the modern foreign languages and religious education departments are situated). This will also mean that the stairwells in these areas will need to be secured and reinforced prior to further usage.

The main hall and canteen's roof also require further inspection as the surveyor was unable to accurately determine whether RAAC has been used in this area; we have been informed that the area has the characteristics of a RAAC installation and therefore our plans are assuming that these areas cannot be used. This will mean that the school's hall and main canteen area will need to be taken out of action until a point that it is definitively determined whether RAAC is present; this will also have an impact on the school's ability to provide its current break time and lunch time food offer in the short term.

At this point in time, our priority is to enact our management plan in order to ensure that the school community is safe from any risk posed by RAAC in these areas. We have asked Mr Davey, Assistant Headteacher, to carefully review the school's current timetable in order to re-room the affected areas of the school throughout the two-week timetable. We are in a position to do this as the majority of the school is unaffected. This will ensure we are able to maintain onsite education for all year groups throughout this challenging period.

As I am sure that parents and carers will be able to comprehend, there is a significant amount of work that now needs to be done to secure areas of the school, rearrange the timetable and allow the staff to relocate their classroom resources. **It is for this reason that we have taken the decision to close the school to students on Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th September 2023; we are hopeful to be able to start face-to-face teaching on Wednesday 20th September 2023 for the majority of students.** We will update parents and carers in writing by the end of the day on Monday 18th September 2023. We are also confident that we will be able to offer remote learning on Tuesday 19th September 2023 once we have reviewed the situation with staff; we would therefore ask parents and carers to consider how their child can remotely access lessons on Tuesday.

We sincerely apologise to parents and carers for the short notice that we have been able to provide and inconvenience caused. However, we trust that you can appreciate that these are exceptional circumstances and that we will be doing our best to ensure that the site is secure and we are able to keep disruption to the children's education to an absolute minimum. Based on our experience of the pandemic, we know how resilient our community is to responding to the challenges of unforeseen circumstances and we hope that next week will ensure we are in a position to be fully open to all students by Monday 25th September 2023. In the meantime, should parents and carers have any questions, including about remote access on Tuesday, they can email the school on emailqueries@vynersschool.org.uk and staff will be in a position to begin responding on Monday 18th September 2023, including a frequently asked question document.

Yours sincerely



Dr Martina Lecky
Chief Executive Officer
Vanguard Learning Trust



Mr Gary Mullings
Headteacher
Vyners School