

1st September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am sure that many of you would have seen the news reports that broke in the press late on Thursday afternoon regarding school buildings made with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). Following direction and communication from the DfE late yesterday afternoon, I am writing to inform you that we have taken the difficult decision to vacate the Tower, North and South block areas at The Appleton School. This is in light of the discovery of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and following advice from the Department for Education (DfE).

RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete; because it is weaker than regular concrete, concerns have been raised about its long-term durability. A full explainer for parents can be found [here](#).

A DfE-commissioned survey recently identified that RAAC panels were used in the construction of some of the school's buildings. After careful analysis, DfE has recently changed its guidance to education settings on the management of RAAC to take a more precautionary approach. It is therefore directing bodies responsible for the management of education premises to take out of use all spaces with confirmed RAAC unless appropriate mitigations are in place.

The Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, said:

"Nothing is more important than making sure children and staff are safe in schools and colleges, which is why we are acting on new evidence about RAAC now, ahead of the start of term.

"We must take a cautious approach because that is the right thing to do for both pupils and staff".

We will therefore be taking the affected areas out of use while we put safety measures in place. You will appreciate, of course, that the safety of our students and staff is of paramount importance to all concerned.

Unfortunately, due to the reduced capacity on our school site, there will be some unavoidable disruption to students' education. We are working to ensure that the impact on students is kept to an absolute minimum. Specifically, we are planning to offer a hybrid of remote and on site learning during the first week back 5th – 8th September 2023. Year 7 and Year 12 Induction will continue to take place on site as originally planned on Tuesday 5th September. From Wednesday 6th – Friday 7th September Years 7, 11, 12 and 13 will be on site, with Years 8, 9 and 10 remote learning.

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The DfE will be supporting us throughout and will also be assisting with longer-term remediation measures so that the affected areas can be returned to use once we are fully confident it is safe to do so.

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 students is kept to a minimum.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter and I will continue to update you as more information becomes available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Cox', written in a cursive style.

Ms S Cox
Headteacher