



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

Media Statement

Reinforced Autoclaves Aerated Concrete (RAAC) BWCET TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURES

Our Trust's overriding concern and absolute priority remains the safeguarding, safety and education of our children. As a Trust we are working tirelessly to identify remedial arrangements that provide a safe and appropriate environment for learning to minimise disruption to our children's education. We are working closely with the DfE now to identify suitable measures that will enable us to recommence the education of our children as soon as possible.

The schools and teachers are busy dedicating their efforts to ensuring that education will continue to be provided to pupils in the best way possible in these circumstances. They are our priority.

Teachers across BWCET have all the facilities and space provided by the Trust to continue this endeavour.

On the afternoon of the 31st August 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) informed us that the guidance to schools on the management of RAAC had changed. Subsequently the DfE issued a directive to Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust taking the difficult decision to temporarily close the following three school sites:

- St Anne's Catholic Primary School
- St Benet's Catholic Primary School
- St Leonards Catholic School

The DfE are committed to supporting us throughout and will also be assisting with longer-term remediation measures so that we can bring children back together once we are fully confident it is either safe to do so or, where it is deemed necessary, arrange temporary accommodation.

We wish to reiterate that we absolutely appreciate the real concerns that the temporary closure may cause for our three school communities. We understand the disruption this has caused; however, we have not been left with any choice from the DfE other than to temporarily close as we put emergency measures in place to ensure our school sites' safety. We also acknowledge and appreciate that our children will be disappointed at not coming back to school to see their friends with the usual excitement they have.

The DfE have confirmed that the decision to close has been taken out of an abundance of caution to ensure children and staff safety and we will be doing all we can to ensure that the impact is kept to a minimum and to recommence the education of our children.



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The Trust will continue to keep staff, parents, carers and the wider community informed as plans develop over the coming days and will not enter into any further dialogue.

Media are strongly advised against turning up at schools (that have been advised to remain shut by the DfE). This could prove dangerous.

We have a PR team in place dealing with this matter on our behalf as our pupils and staff must be our priority. they can be contacted at Allies Group, david.bootle@allies-group.com

ENDS

INFORMATION FOR PRESS

All press enquiries relating to [Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust](#) and its schools are to be directed to David Bootle at Allies Group, david.bootle@allies-group.com