



1st September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and Chew Valley School

Can I firstly say that I hope that the summer has been good for you and that we are really looking forward to welcoming our students back to school. I will continue my communication with parents and carers through my information letter and accompanying video that will be sent as before every couple of weeks. You will however have seen recent media coverage regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and its use in educational settings so it was important that at this early stage I confirmed where Chew Valley School is with this.

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 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, and are currently working with the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Trust 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 have 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 students is kept to an absolute minimum. Rest assured that the safety of students and staff is of paramount importance to all concerned.

Thank you for your understanding.

With very best wishes,

Gareth Beynon
Headteacher