

2 December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Woodlands Site Update**

I am writing to you to firstly apologise for the level of disruption to your child's education over the past couple of weeks, and secondly, to give you an update on what is being done to alleviate the current situation.

I wrote to you earlier in November to explain that we were facing challenges with staffing levels due to Covid 19 and other illnesses. Whilst we have been working hard to keep appropriate staff levels in all classes, it has been increasingly difficult to fully staff all classes and to find suitable supply staff to cover any absence. You may be aware that schools nationally are facing staffing crises, especially with short term supply staff.

The problems we were encountering at that time have been further exacerbated by the failure of the boiler in one area of the site. Many of you will be aware that we have been working with Birmingham City Council to upgrade Woodlands, which as a site, has been neglected for many years.

The boilers were identified as a priority over three years ago, as they were long overdue for replacement. This is a major capital project which has been agreed to and is being managed by Birmingham City Council. However, it became clear at the beginning of September, that the boiler which has just failed, needed urgent replacement before the winter set in.

As you are aware, things came to a head at the end of last week. Whilst the weather was relatively mild, it was possible to keep the classrooms in use, but the sudden drop in temperatures over the weekend, coupled with no safe way to heat the rooms, meant that this was no longer viable. The simple solution of electric heaters has not been possible due to capacity issues with the electrical supply to the site. We also have to consider the risk of heated surfaces close to the children.

Birmingham City Council were aware that any delay in replacing the boiler would probably lead to classroom closure and have been working to expedite the project. They recognise the urgency of the current situation and as an interim measure are going to install generators to power temporary heating until a permanent solution can be put in place.

As of today, we are expecting contractors to visit site to install cabling in readiness for the additional work, which we hope will be carried out over the weekend. An asbestos survey has been carried out and, as long as no asbestos has been identified in the area, we would hope to have the classrooms back in use soon.

We will continue to prioritise keeping all pupils in school. Sending pupils home will always be a last resort. However, as part of our daily risk assessment for safety, should staffing levels become too low, or the site become unsafe, we would have no option other than to close classes. Having said that, we are contacting parents to offer some temporary solutions, which may include asking your child to wrap up warmly so that they can be in school, doing activities in one of the unheated rooms.

We continue to ask parents to have a 'Plan B' for childcare in the event of us having to close a class.

Please be assured that our main aim is to keep pupils in school. We will always aim to minimise disruption and we will ensure parents affected are kept informed. Should you have any concerns or want clarity on the situation, please email me at [head@uffculme.bham.sch.uk](mailto:head@uffculme.bham.sch.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CS', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Charlotte Stubbs**  
**Headteacher**