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Headteacher: Mrs. L. Ashton

Friday 8th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Heating issues and plans for next week

We are very aware that the start back to school has been very difficult, not only in light of Government changes and restrictions, but also due to the issues that we have had with our heating in school, which have compounded these difficulties. This has meant that our vulnerable and key worker children have not yet been able to return to school as planned.

Earlier in the week, we shared with parents that we were very hopeful that the heating problems had been rectified. The original source of the leak had been found, and fixed, and we were well on track to getting back to some kind of normality. At this point we shared with parents that we hoped to get vulnerable and critical worker children back into school by the end of the week. Unfortunately, after engineers working tirelessly all week, we had a big set-back yesterday, where we have been left again without heating and without any certain idea of when this will be resolved. We have additional heating specialists who have been employed to come into school, on Monday morning, to carry out further investigation and hopefully resolve this issue once and for all. **Therefore, school will remain closed on Monday for everyone except vulnerable and key worker children from the Reception Class.** For all involved in trying to get the heating issues resolved, thinking this was initially a short term closure, it has been a very frustrating and upsetting week.

After much discussion and consideration, we are now at the stage where we have a 'Plan B' for our vulnerable and critical worker children, should the heating not come back on by Monday, which will be available from Tuesday 12th January.

I have liaised with the governors, the Diocese and the Local Authority to find a safe and secure alternative place for our children to learn, should they not be able to access Our Lady of Lourdes. Following much discussion, I have been able to secure an area of St. Bede's RC Comprehensive, Peterlee, for our vulnerable and critical worker children should we need it. This area would be totally separate from pupils and staff at St Bede's and we would have our own facilities and entry and exit point. While I am aware that there would be some travelling involved in this plan, we really do not have any alternative and we are acutely aware of parents who require this provision immediately. The fine details of the provision that we have negotiated at St. Bede's, should we need to use their site, will follow next week **and will only be applicable to the Year 1-6 pupils, our Reception children will continue to attend Our Lady of Lourdes.** I will be liaising with Mrs Craik, Headteacher at St Bede's, on Monday, to ensure there are strict risk assessments and protocols in place to ensure that our children are given the best possible environment to learn and will be warm, happy, healthy and safe.

This provision at St. Bede's, should we need to use it, will be available to those vulnerable and key worker children that we have already confirmed.

As you are fully aware, this situation is totally out of our control but I would like to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to resolve it as quickly as possible. I would like to thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

We will update you on Monday as soon as we have any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ashton

Headteacher