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Headteacher: Miss E A Cox MA MBA



27 November 2015

Dear Parents

### **Proposal to Close Rear Access Gate**

I write to inform you of a proposal to close the rear access gate to school from King Alfred's Drive temporarily. This closure will take place next half term only, from Tuesday 5 January 2016 to Monday 22 February 2016. A number of pupils use the gate to come into school each day. Concerns have been raised about the use of the gate during the dark winter months.

- Pupils getting to the gate use an unlit pathway near a relatively secluded, remote woodland area on dark mornings and evenings.
- Pupils cross the school playing fields in snow, icy, wet or slippery conditions to reach the main school buildings. There is no footpath across the school playing fields: sometimes pupils spend the day in wet shoes and their lower legs are splattered with mud.
- Bellrock, the school's facilities provider, has expressed concerns about the health and safety of their members of staff when locking and unlocking the gate each morning and evening. Keeping the gate area accessible in icy conditions is restricted by problems in transporting salt and grit to the location and maintaining these materials in functional order. A report by Bellrock has been raised with school governors, the Diocese and the Council: it questions whether locking and unlocking the gates daily is appropriate during the winter months.

At a recent meeting with staff of Leeds City Council and Bellrock, I agreed to consult with parents on the proposal to close the back gate in the half-term following the Christmas holidays (Tuesday 5 January 2016 to Monday 22 February 2016).

I understand that this may add additional time to your child's journey to and from school for this period. However the factors outlined above are, I believe, credible and convincing. I am recommending support for this proposal, largely on the basis of safeguarding the wellbeing of pupils. The opening and closing of the gate will continue as normal outside this period when days are longer and the path leading to the rear of the school site is not so dark.

Please contact Mr Gibbons at school no later than Thursday 10 December to make your views known. Contact details: [info@cardinalheenan.com](mailto:info@cardinalheenan.com)

### **Emergency School Closure**

It may be necessary to close the school in conditions such as heavy snowfall which leaves the school site inaccessible. The decision to send children home or to close the school will be taken only when absolutely necessary for the safety of pupils and staff. Should the decision be made to close, a text will be sent to parents and an announcement will be given on the school website at [www.cardinalheenan.com](http://www.cardinalheenan.com). You will receive the text only if you have provided the school with a current mobile phone number. Please notify the school as soon as possible of any changes to your contact details. Notice of closure will also be sent to Radio Leeds and Radio Aire. Please ensure that page 9 of the Pupil Planner has been completed. This informs the school about travel arrangements for your child on such days. If the school closes early and parents are not prepared for their children to be sent home, pupils will be supervised in school until parents collect them. In the event of severe weather, please do not telephone the school to seek clarification about possible school closure. It is likely that a large number of callers will result in a constant engaged tone. The education of your child is very important to us: school closures will occur rarely.



**Advent**

Advent begins on Sunday: it is the season of waiting, expecting, hoping and preparing for the coming of Christ at Christmas. Advent prayer and reflection will take place in our tutor groups each day. The school chapel will be open for prayer and Advent activities. We will also be fundraising and are asking pupils to come up with imaginative, creative ways to help others by supporting CAFOD and St Gemma's Hospice. Pupils will be offered the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation next Friday, 4 December, when Fr Sean Crawley, our Priest Chaplain, and other priests from our diocese will be in school. During Advent we hope to remind pupils about the meaning of Christ's birth and welcome his arrival in our lives at Christmas.

**School Council Elections**

Parents, please encourage your child to consider standing in the forthcoming election of our new school council. Candidates' election statements should be handed to Miss Whitford or Mrs Serra Clarke by Wednesday 2 December. All pupils in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 are invited to stand for election by writing a statement of no more than 140 characters on 'Why you should vote for me'. Candidates will present their statements during hustings at year group assemblies. Each pupil in Years 7 to 10 will have a vote.

**PE Kit**

The majority of those present at the parents' forum last week stated that the school's PE Kit is appropriate and that current options on sports legwear should be maintained. Parental views on sportswear for girls, particularly whether sport leggings should be worn as an alternative to shorts or tracksuit bottoms, would be very welcome. Please respond by email to [info@cardinalheenan.com](mailto:info@cardinalheenan.com) no later than Thursday 3 December.

**Sibling Photographs**

Arts Photography are offering parents an opportunity to buy photographs of brothers and sisters together. A photographer will be visiting school on Thursday 3 December between 9.10am and 11.15am. If you are interested in taking up this option, please email [info@cardinalheenan.com](mailto:info@cardinalheenan.com) or telephone reception on 887 3240, giving the names and tutor groups of your children. Proofs will be sent to school by Wednesday 8 December. Parents may order online by Monday 14 December. Prints will be delivered to school on Wednesday 16 December.

**Training Day**

Please remember that Monday 30 November is a staff training day when there will be no school for pupils. School begins again on Tuesday 1 December at 8.55am.

Yours sincerely



E A Cox, Headteacher