

5 March 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Recent school closures

I wanted to write to you to explain the recent school closures and our processes that support the decisions that we made. Firstly, I hope you understand that it is always a very difficult decision to make as we have to take into account so many different stakeholders.

Our most important consideration is to make sure that everyone is safe. On Thursday morning key decision makers were on the phone at 5.30am to establish if the school sites were safe and if we had enough staff who could make it in to work so that the children/students would receive an appropriate education. Once we had decided we were going to open, we then put various measures in place to make the sites safe so that we adhered to all health and safety protocols. During the day it became apparent at TLA and TLAP that some staff had to leave to get home, as they lived in areas where the snow was falling heaviest (some staff live over an hour's drive away from Slough) and it was becoming increasingly dangerous for them to be driving in such treacherous conditions. As a result this meant, particularly at TLAP, that we would not meet the statutory requirements for teacher/child ratio and consequently we decided to close earlier. However, we were able to ensure that the children could get their lunch.

By about 2pm on Thursday many schools had already decided to close on Friday although the forecast looked to be improving. We decided to wait until we felt more confident about that forecast. Of course, this is very difficult because we are not professional forecasters and rely on BBC and Met Office weather guidelines to help us. Further snow started to fall and we then received information from several staff who felt it was going to be impossible for them to get to work on Friday. As a result we decided to close TLA and TLAP that evening. We understand the significant inconvenience this causes parents and carers and felt that this would give you some time to make some alternative arrangements rather than wait to find out on Friday morning.

Throughout the process, we communicate with other schools via e-mail and in fact by 4am Friday every secondary school had decided to close in Slough and about 75% of Primaries had made the same decision. PPPA had already dealt with a Norovirus outbreak and under advice from Public Health had closed on the Monday and Tuesday and so did everything they could to stay open on Friday. They only had 2 staff that could not get to work and so they remained open which was great news.

Attendance at school did drop for both days as some parents felt that was the best decision and of course that has to be the decision of the parent and not the school. All staff worked exceptionally hard and were thoroughly professional throughout the week and I cannot thank them enough for their approach in difficult circumstances. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and I hope this letter helps you in understanding what we did and why.

I would welcome any feedback on our communication of events and any other suggestions you may have and suggest you inform the Headteachers at each respective school so that information can be passed on.

In the meantime, thank you once again for your support and I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Bryant', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rhodri Bryant
Executive Principal
The Langley Academy Trust