

Whitley Lodge First School

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am sure that some of you may have seen some recent news stories featuring Whitley Lodge First School and the identification of contaminated sand. I would like to reassure all parents / carers at this time there is no immediate risk to any pupils or staff within the school.

However, the information shared in the media has not been factually correct and I understand the concern you may have. Therefore, I would like to clarify the timeline of events and the decisions taken during this period.

I want to explain that we have been in contact with parents / carers of nursery class children this afternoon to explain the situation. (Please see the attached information sent to parents/carers in Nursery earlier today.)

I would like to clarify that children in other classes did not access the nursery classroom or have the opportunity to play with the contaminated sand.

I would like to set out a timeline of events for clarity and to ensure there is no ambiguity.

Timeline of events

- Wednesday 6th May - Unbeknown to the school, school staff replaced the sand in the Nursery sandpit, which regularly happens throughout the year.
- Friday 8th May - NT Council notified schools on Friday afternoon that some play sand was placed on product recall list. This is part of a national recall and was named on the government product safety alerts, reports and recalls list. ([Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls - GOV.UK](#))
- Friday 8th May - School acted quickly and followed the advice from NT Council. Which was to thoroughly cover the sand pit and place away it safely away from children.
- Monday 11th May - As soon as test results were received at 10am, we relocated the Nursery children to White class for the rest of the day, as advised.
- The deep clean took place on Monday evening and air testing was continuous for over 7 hours. Every airborne fibre test result was negative.
- Monday 11th May - The Health and Safety team confirmed at 8pm that as there was no airborne fibres found in the classroom and confirmed that Nursery was safe for the children to use on Tuesday.
- Thursday 14th May - Following further advice with colleagues at North Tyneside Local Authority, it was agreed to communicate with parents / carers of nursery class children.

Clarification contrary to the media - Our school was never closed to Nursery children and there was no lost learning. We planned to continue to house Nursery in White class until we were informed Nursery was safe. We adhered to the North Tyneside Health and Safety team's advice throughout the process. On Monday afternoon, the sand, sandpit and other soft fabric items (as a precaution) were removed by safety experts.

I want to reassure you that we acted as quickly as possible, removed any risk, worked with experts, and were led by them through the process. I am disappointed that there are media inaccuracies but I thought it was important to write to you this evening to allay any worries you may have. I would like to reiterate that the risk to children is classed as low.

We will share any further details with parents / carers as soon as we receive this from supporting agencies.

Thank you for your understanding and patience with this matter.

Yours faithfully

Jennifer Palmer
Headteacher