



6th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As Chair of Governors I am writing to let you know about an issue that the school has been dealing with since last November.

In 2001 Haringey Council sold off some industrial units backing on to the school and in the sale deed included an emergency escape route right through our playground. Up until last year the school had no knowledge of this as the previous occupiers of the site have never sought to exercise this right. There is a gate in the party wall which has been and still is padlocked and we never thought anything about it.

The adjoining premises have now been let out to someone else and are being refurbished. Last November we received a letter from the adjoining freeholder asking us to unlock the gate as we were preventing them from exercising their right of way. This was the first that anyone at the school was aware of the existence of the right of way. We immediately forwarded that letter to various relevant departments of the council (who are the legal owners of the school site) including the legal department. The council have accepted that they made a mistake in 2001 and that they should not have granted that right of way at the time.

This is a real concern from a safeguarding perspective. Whilst the escape route may never be used we cannot assume that that will be the case. The council's preferred option to resolve the problem is for the gate to be alarmed in some way and then for the school to round up the children when the adjoining occupiers exercise the right of way through the playground. We consider that too much of a safeguarding risk and this was confirmed by Haringey's chief safeguarding officer.

The only other alternative that the council are offering us is for some sort of walkway through our playground. This would involve the narrowing of the School entrance adjoining the Job Centre as well as resulting in a loss of playground space. The adjoining owners are now ready to occupy the building and have threatened legal action if we do not unlock the gate by the 20th July. The council say that they are working towards building this secure walkway during the summer holiday but we have not yet seen any viable plans and can not see that this will happen. We are very concerned about what will happen in September when the children will be back in school and we are obliged to have the gate open.

We are continually attempting to engage the council in discussing what can be done but are becoming increasingly frustrated and concerned and believe that we now need to advise parents of this safeguarding situation.

Best wishes

Caroline Schloss

Chair of Governors



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