



Wednesday 4th October 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you are hopefully aware, we are in the process of forming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with Dudley Wood, Kates Hill and Sledmere primaries. Part of this process is for legal experts to conduct land surveys of each school and for this to then determine what land and facilities are transferred from the Local Authority to the new Academy Trust upon conversion.

As you may read about in today's Dudley News, the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on the field will form part of the land given over to the new MAT. It was believed by the Bowling Green Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) that this land had been handed over to Dudley Council by the Local Education Authority for joint school and community use in 2008, however, new land searches have revealed that this transfer never happened and was never actually supposed to happen. As such the MUGA and the grassed area that the games area sits on still belongs to Dudley Local Education Authority and therefore the school. The Local Authority has said that the MUGA and the field it sits on will subsequently be transferred over to the new MAT along with the rest of the Netherbrook site, on Wednesday 1st November.

Unfortunately, the rules for MATs are somewhat different to those for Local Authorities and the issues of legal liability, costs of maintenance, insurance and operating the site mean that there appears to be no other option but to fence this area of the field off as the school and MAT cannot operate the MUGA facility in the way that it is organised by the council at the moment. The Local Authority have been very clear that this land must transfer over to the MAT.

I would like to reassure parents that Netherbrook finds itself stuck in the middle of this problem and is most certainly not the cause of it, despite how this may be presented in the papers. We have not sought to take ownership of this area and were surprised when the LA told us that it was transferring with the rest of the site. We will have to pay considerable fencing costs to secure the games area and field and we are well aware that many children use the MUGA facility outside of school hours. However, currently we cannot see any way around the legal implications involved in maintaining this games area. I have been in consultation with the Bowling Green TRA to see if they could suggest a solution, but as yet I have not heard back from them. As a school we have no desire to see this resource taken away from the community. Unfortunately, Health and Safety and liability concerns may make this unavoidable. I would also add that the MUGA facility will always be available in some capacity to local children outside of school hours, the exact format of this availability – for instance making it bookable at no charge, will be decided in the coming week and months.

We will continue to work with the Local Authority and the TRA to resolve the issue ASAP. I will keep you informed. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Rawlings