



## ST THOMAS' CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Thomas' Road  
St Anne's on Sea  
Lancashire  
FY8 1JN  
Tel: 01253-722022  
Fax: 01253-722886  
[www.st-thomas.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.st-thomas.lancs.sch.uk)

**Headteacher**  
**Mrs Claire Gilmour**

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware, St Thomas' CE Primary is used as a Polling Station, with the next local election being held on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019**. This has already been planned for within our holiday dates and school will be closed for an INSET day.

However, we have just been notified that school will also be used as a polling station in respect of the **potential** European Parliamentary Elections on **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019**.

The Governing Board remains extremely concerned about the use of our school for this purpose. No area of the school, including the polling station, can be isolated securely from the rest of the school, and therefore we cannot prevent members of the public coming into contact with the children. The way that members of the public gain access to the polling station means that the school perimeter has to be left unlocked, and therefore means that our school is left unsecured during school hours, allowing access to the public and also meaning that we can't ensure our children stay within the school premises.

As a polling station, we have to allow access to facilities, which means that the electoral staff (who we believe do not have to be DBS checked) come into face-to-face contact with the pupils.

We are sure you appreciate that the health and safety of your children in our care is of absolute paramount importance.

The issues that we have referred to raise very real safeguarding concerns, and therefore, following protracted discussions with Fylde Borough Council and Lancashire County Council regarding these concerns, in view of our suggestions regarding possible alternative venues having been declined, the Governors have had to make the decision, **should** the European Parliamentary Elections take place, to **close the school on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019**. We feel that otherwise we cannot ensure the safety of our children. We have been advised that due to the potential short notice, this will be regarded as an unavoidable closure.

We have been advised of future planned polling days, and these will continue to be considered in future as part of our holiday/INSET pattern. Where elections take place that we have not previously been informed about, we will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible. Nevertheless, we will continue to liaise with Fylde Borough Council to make them aware of the above points and the potential danger and disruption that we are faced with, and work with them to find alternative polling provision in the future.

We apologise for any disruption this may cause to your plans, and trust that you recognise the negotiations that have been taking place regarding this matter and appreciate the reasons that this decision has had to be made should the European elections take place.

As soon as we receive confirmation regarding the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, we will let you know. However, we felt it best to forewarn you of this potential closure.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Scargill

