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Friday 15th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been an incredibly busy week, alongside reading a lot of government guidance, I've been writing supporting letters for parental appeals, going through the three-year school budget and also having virtual meetings with other Headteachers and the Local Authority. It's almost reassuring that there is still some semblance of 'normality' and that things that keep a school going still need doing.

Wear it Blue for Ethan

It is especially sad that we weren't able to be in school for what would have been Ethan's last 'Wear it Blue for Ethan' day. Despite not being able to be there in person, staff (both past and present) all sent through photos to Mr Beard who kindly put them together in a collage that he can keep. Please do look at the Wear it Blue for 2020 Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/284743262546571/>

One of our families has also decided to raise money by walking one million steps in the next three months and more information can be found on their GoFundMe page here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/onemillionforEthan>



Gospel Medley Singalong

Mr Miles and Mrs Brookes are organising a Gospel Medley singalong and are looking for contributions from parents, staff and children. There's another week for contributions so get singing! Details can be found on our [School Closure: Challenges](#) page.

Year 1 Transition

A couple of months ago, I wrote to you all about my plan to 're-distribute' the classes in Year 1 and Year 4. After listening to views from parents, children and staff, it was decided that this would have a greater negative impact on the pupils in Year 4 and that going forward, this would happen at the end of Year 1 and again in Year 4 with the current Year 1 class being the first cohort to experience this.

Given the current situation, I strongly feel that it would not be appropriate to split the Year 1 children at the end of this year. If we are (hopefully) in a position where we can return to 'normal' in September, then the children will need as much consistency as possible which means remaining in their current classes.

I still believe that a mix-up of classes would be beneficial and therefore the current Year 1 children will have their mix-up at the end of Year 2. The current Year R children will still have their 'mix-up' at the end of Year 1.

Parental Survey

Normally at this time of year, I ask parents to complete a short survey which helps to inform our plans for the coming year. I just wanted to let you know that I'm still planning on sending this out but it will be after the half-term break.

Thank A Teacher

I put this on our school Facebook and Twitter pages earlier this week but I wanted to remind everyone that Thursday is 'Thank a Teacher Day'. If you wanted to show your appreciation for your child's class teacher then you can send them a card through the website (<https://thankateacher.co.uk/>) or you can share your appreciation on social media using the hashtag #ThankATeacher. Please also tag the school using @bpcepschool on Facebook or Twitter.

COVID-19 Update

As you will all know, on Sunday earlier this week Boris Johnson announced that the government believed that the country was in a position to welcome more children into school as of 1st June and that this would start with Year R, Year 1 and Year 6.

I sent out some information regarding the government's announcement earlier this week – if you have not read this yet, you can find it on our [Coronavirus News](#) page. Since then schools have been inundated with a lot of information – not all of it helpful and some of it contradictory.

As I said in one of my updates, it is right and proper that the final decision on whether or not to send your children to school rests with the parents. I know that, for some of you, this is an extremely difficult decision – my wife and I are struggling with the same dilemma. Our role is to make school a safe a place as is possible and to be honest and frank with you about what we can and cannot achieve. At least then, your decision is informed.

What has been very helpful, is the information that you have provided. On Tuesday I sent all parents a link to a Google Form and considering you only had two days to complete this, we had an extremely high response rate (86%). I will be sharing the results from this parental survey on Monday. Your comments have also informed our planning and you will see that questions you have raised will be addressed.

I have created a new section on the school website, [School Closure: Phased Return](#). Over the course of the week, we will be adding to this materials that will inform and support you throughout this process. There is also a Frequently Asked Questions section which I will keep updated and, if you have a question, please feel free to email me (although check the website first in case it's already been answered!) – headteacher@bridge.kent.sch.uk

On Tuesday I will be sending out a copy of the school's plan to reintroduce Year R, Year 1 and Year 6 to school and I will then be asking those parents to make a final decision on whether or not their children will be in school from 1st June. I don't wish to force any decisions but it is important that we know exactly how many children to expect as we can only have maximum class sizes of 15.

Thank you for your continued patience.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Tibbles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

James Tibbles