

Headteacher: James Tibbles

Tel: 01227 830276

Email: office@bridge.kent.sch.uk

Web: www.bridge.kent.sch.uk

Bridge & Patricbourne CEP School

Conyngnam Lane

Bridge, Canterbury

Kent

CT4 5JX



Saturday 2nd January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you have all had a relatively relaxing and quiet break with your respective families over the past couple of weeks. I, myself, found this period very different to what we are used to as a family being unable to see family members but this did allow us to spend more time together as an immediate family (and being beaten at Monopoly by my 9-year old daughter!)

I wanted to write ahead of the children's return on Monday to address the news around COVID-19 and education over the past couple of weeks. I don't doubt that there will be some genuine anxiety amongst our parents and, as always, this has most likely not been helped with the inconsistent messages coming from government and, in some cases, the media.

There are two specific issues I would like to address.

Testing in Primary Schools

There have been mixed reports from DfE about the role of testing in primary schools and we are still awaiting official guidance on this but in the meantime, there are a few comments I would like to make.

Much has been made of the role of the military in supporting testing. I would like to be clear that this is logistical support only and, to the best of my knowledge, military personnel are not involved in administration of the actual test.

Testing of primary school children (if this is introduced) will not be mandatory and no tests will be conducted without explicit parental consent. Should testing for our children take place, I would like to assure all parents that no one but a trained medical professional will be administering tests on our children; I do not feel that it is morally or ethically appropriate to ask any member of staff to administer a test on someone else's child.

Closure of Primary Schools

At the time of writing this letter, the DfE has already announced that all primary schools in particular areas of Kent will remain 'closed' (I say closed although they will be very much open to identified children as well as providing remote learning). As things stand, this does not include primary schools in the Canterbury district and therefore our school will be ready to welcome children back on Monday.

I strongly believe that school is the best place for children and that we, as a community, are doing everything we can to be aware and control the associated risks. I, for one, am perfectly comfortable sending my daughter to her primary school but I recognise that different families have different circumstances and what is right for one family may not necessarily be right for another.

Regardless, the decision to open or close is not one that is made by individual schools; we are obligated to follow government guidance on this but I would urge parents to take this opportunity to re-read our **Remote Learning Protocols** which can be found on the **New Normal** section of our school website. I feel I should also highlight that any parents choosing to keep their child at home must recognise that the class teacher will still be delivering a full-time



teaching offer to the children who remain in school. Whilst we will do all we can to support, any home education will be based upon the Oak Academy resources and may not necessarily directly link with what is happening in the classroom.

We are in an ever-changing situation and I know that there are still discussions taking place over this weekend between unions and both local and national government.

As always, as soon as I know anything, I will be in touch but in the meantime, I hope to see you all back on Monday 4th January.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Tibbles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Tibbles
Headteacher