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Dear Parents,

You may remember I wrote to you directly last year and I am sorry that we find ourselves once again in similar situation. Under the circumstances it feels odd to wish you all a happy new year, nevertheless I hope you have had a restful break and I am sure we all wish this year will be a happier one than 2020. I also hope you and your children, wider families and friends are keeping safe and well.

This note follows from the governors' meeting yesterday at which the school's on-going response to the pandemic was of course the central discussion. We spent much of the meeting discussing the health and well-being of the entire school community but in particular the staff.

Through parents' responses to surveys and individual messages and comments I know you share the governors' huge admiration for our incredibly dedicated staff team. They returned to school this term as committed as ever, ready to face this very challenging time and looking forward to seeing our children again. But this is still a very uncertain and anxious time, not helped by the government's last-minute decision-making and lack of guidance. The upshot of the current situation is that we have both large numbers of children at school and larger numbers at home, as a result the workload and pressure on the staff has immensely increased and as a governing body we are concerned about the impact this may have on our excellent team.

My aim in writing to you is to reiterate the messages Mr Tibbles has already set out in his newsletters. To prevent the further spread of the virus, as the government has advised, and to support our staff in delivering teaching as best they can, please, if possible, keep your children at home, it is the safest place for them. The school as a whole remains completely committed to supporting key workers who need to send their children to school but anything that alleviates the current pressure would enormously helpful and welcome. As a partial response to this situation the governors have agreed that we need to put in place a cap on the numbers of children in school and Mr Tibbles will also be letting you know about this in his next newsletter. I hope you will share our reasoning behind this decision which was taken unanimously after considerable discussion of the current situation.

In the meantime, I would to repeat the thanks I expressed in my previous note – which seems a long while ago now, but the added time only make me feel this more strongly - we have an exceptional school community. Staff, children, and parents have continued to work together in an extraordinarily positive way, communicating and collaborating to address the on-going challenges of the last few months, demonstrating both their stamina and the success of the school's focus on resilience. We have a great team with terrific leadership from Mr Tibbles and the Senior Leadership Team, all of whom I would to thank. My thanks also to all of our parents and my fellow governors for your continued support of the school.

Stay well, with my best wishes,

Matthew Jones, Chair of Governors

