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Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

This afternoon, the government published the guidance that was alluded to in the Prime Ministerial announcement on Sunday evening and, interestingly, the emphasis of the advice around children of critical workers has changed.

You will know that over the past few weeks, I have been quite insistent that children who should be safely kept at home, should be kept at home.

I make no apology for this stance although I know that it has not been universally popular but I had to prioritise the safety of the children and staff in my care. It is also a struggle that my own family has had to deal with as my wife and I are both still working and having to balance our jobs with our daughter.

The new guidance indicates that schools should encourage children of key workers to attend school but, whilst I would not turn a family or a child away, I *cannot* in good conscience tell you that your child should be at school.

As a teacher of almost 20 years, this does not sit well with me – education is vitally important but, as a parent, the wellbeing and safety of our children is paramount.

There is nothing I want more than to have the children back in school. We are all struggling, we are all part of a national effort to stop the spread of coronavirus and I still believe that where at all possible, the safest place for a child is their home.

However, I recognise that this is a decision for individual families and I also recognise that for many families, this is not a choice that they have; their jobs and financial security may be dependent upon their child being at school. I also recognise that there may be emotional benefits to children being back at school – again, this is a decision for individual families.

I also recognise that one of the reasons that the government are taking this approach is to gradually increase the number of children in school rather than having a sudden spike in school attendance.

If you are a critical worker and require childcare then please do get in touch with me via email and I will add you to the weekly registration list. My email address is [headteacher@bridge.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@bridge.kent.sch.uk)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Tibbles'.

James Tibbles,  
Headteacher

