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Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Over the past four weeks, since the May half-term break, we have been able to welcome approximately 40% of our children back to school either as a child of a 'critical worker' or a pupil in Year R, Year 1 or Year 6.

As you would expect, a great deal of planning went into this endeavour and I am pleased that this has gone so well. I have had numerous reports from parents citing the change in their child since they have been able to return to school; a change I have also seen in my own daughter as she returned to her own school after half-term.

However, as I have reflected upon the pride I feel in the school, and its community, this is tempered by the fact that we still have over 200 children who have not been in school since March. It is all too easy to console ourselves with the fact that certain year groups were selected by the government as a priority and so I inevitably asked myself: *How can we safely get more children back in school so that they too can have the same emotional and social benefits?*

There is no easy nor simple answer.

Over the past week or so, I have been in discussions with staff and governors with the aim developing a plan to get more children back into school. A proposal was submitted to the Local Authority at the end of last week for their approval and earlier today I met with the governors to ratify this.

To cut a long story short, I have a proposal – but it is one that requires the support of the whole school community if we are going to be able to implement this plan.

### The Proposal

In order to get more children back in school, I am asking parents to do something which goes against my nature as a teacher but, as a parent, I feel is the moral thing to do. I am asking parents of those children in Year R, Year 1 and Year 6 to voluntarily give up their legal right to send their children into school for a week.

If we had sufficient agreement and support amongst the parental body, my plan is that from the 6<sup>th</sup> July the whole school will attend on a rota-basis for the following two weeks. Children will be invited to attend school for a week (either w/c 6<sup>th</sup> July or w/c 13<sup>th</sup> July) with their own class teacher and in their own classroom.

We would, of course, organise this so that children from the same family are attending in the same week and, in order to facilitate this, we will continue finishing school at 1pm on a Friday afternoon.

I realise that I am asking a lot, especially of those families whose children are already in school but last Friday I wrote about showing compassion and challenging inequality– I cannot, in good conscience, sit by and not at least attempt to get more children back in school.



I think it needs to be recognised that I am also asking a lot of the staff and that this plan does come with a small increased risk to them. However, they all recognise the enormous potential benefit to our children to be able to have this week in school, once again displaying our Christian value of *service* to the children and families of Bridge School.

I fully appreciate that there will be some families who are reliant on children being in school so that they can go to work and we will have some provision for this when it is not ‘your child’s week’ to be in school. However, if we have too many children in this group, this will impact our ability to deliver this proposal, so I would urge you to only use this facility if you have no other option.

Regretfully, due to the complexities involved, it will not be possible to pick which week you want your child to be in school, but we will naturally do our best to consider friendship groups. Once these groups have been set, we won’t be able to change them.

During these two weeks, the children will also have the opportunity to (socially-distanced) meet with their new class teacher for September.

The final two days of term (w/c 20<sup>th</sup> July) will be allocated to the Year 6 children so that they can properly celebrate their end of their time at Bridge School and we will also continue to allow for critical workers for these two days.

Term will finish on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July.

	w/c 29 <sup>th</sup> June	w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> July	w/c 13 <sup>th</sup> July	w/c 20 <sup>th</sup> July (Mon & Tues)
<b>Year R</b>	School open	½ class in school with class teacher (Group A)	½ class in school with class teacher (Group B)	Critical worker children only
<b>Year 1</b>	School open			
<b>Year 2 to 5</b>	Critical workers only	Group B critical worker children in school (limited numbers)	Group A critical worker children in school (limited numbers)	
<b>Year 6</b>	School open			In school for celebration/transition

### What does this mean for me?

If you have a child in Year R, Year 1 or Year 6, I am asking you to voluntarily withdraw your child from school for a week in order to allow children from Years 2 to 5 to attend. Your child will still be able to attend school the other week.

If you are reliant on school for work (i.e. a critical worker), there will still be provision for your child on the alternate week.

If you have a child in Year 2, 3, 4 or 5, then this plan means that your child will be able to attend school for a week to see their friends, their class teacher and bring this academic year to some form of closure – they would also be able to meet their new class teacher.

**Please note that this is only a proposal at this stage and can only continue if we have sufficient parental support.**

### What You Need to Do Now

You’ve guessed it – it’s another Google Form!

In order to determine if this plan is feasible, we need to know from our parents how much support this plan has and essentially, how many places we need to allocate for children of critical workers. We will need this information ASAP and so the form will only be open until Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June before we make a final decision whether or not to proceed.

Please complete the form for each child. The linked form below will ask you:

- Family Surname
- Child's name and class
- If your child is in Year R, 1 or 6, would you be prepared/able to voluntarily withdraw your child from school for a week to enable another child to return?
- If your child is in Year 2 to 5, would you like your child to be in school for a week prior to the summer holiday?
- If you are a critical worker, do you need provision for the alternate week?

**Google Form link:** <https://forms.gle/D9vyLL9May6qeaDa8>

### [When Will We Know More?](#)

On Thursday, I will be meeting with the governors to discuss the next steps of this proposal. It is at this meeting we will determine if we have sufficient support to proceed and I will be writing to parents on Friday about this.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email: [headteacher@bridge.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@bridge.kent.sch.uk)

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.

Yours sincerely,



James Tibbles,  
Headteacher