Dear Parents/Carers

Hope you are all well and keeping safe

As you will know, the school has remained open throughout  the lockdown period for our vulnerable children and children of key workers. This offer was extended on 1st June for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Early in May, the Government announced its ambition to bring all children back for the last few weeks of term. However, conditions and improvements in the infection rate have not been sufficient to allow this to be done safely and schools are not being asked to open to further year groups.

However, as a school we are concerned that many of our children will not have been in school for 6 months and could be returning in September to a new teacher and a new class. We recognise that this will cause a lot of anxiety to our children and families and will make it more difficult for you all in September if/when things return to some form of normality. Therefore we would like to offer all children the opportunity to attend school for 2 days transition over the last two weeks of term. All children will get to spend the 2 days with their new teacher and some members of their class. As you can imagine, this has taken an awful lot of planning and has created many logistical challenges to ensure we can accommodate all our children in a safe manner. We hope that giving children the opportunity to come in for just a couple of days will alleviate some of the anxieties around returning to school  and give them the chance to see that although school is very different to what they are used to, it is not as scary as they may of imagined. The children that returned in June, despite being some of our youngest children, have been very settled and are enjoying their time back at school.

We plan to do the transition over two weeks. The week beginning 6th July, will be for children that are due to start Reception, Year 3 and Year 5. (This is our current morning nursery, Y2 and Y4 pupils). The week beginning 13th July will be for children that are due to start Y1, Y2, Y4 and Y6. (This is our current Reception, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 pupils). Each class will be split in to 2 groups and each group will do 2 days each. For example Y1 classes would come in for the week beginning 13th July. Half of each class will come in on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday there would be a deep clean of the school so no children would be in (other than the usual vulnerable and key worker children). Then on Thursday and Friday, the second half of the class would attend.

Although we would encourage all parents to send their children to the transition days, this is completely optional. I fully understand that many parents may feel it is not the right time to send their children back and they might have personal family circumstances that means the risk is too great. This is fine and support will be given to your child to settle when they return after the summer. Although we have put plans in place such as a one way system, socially distancing in the classrooms, frequent hand washing and hand sanitiser stations in all areas, staggered starting/finishing times as well as break and lunchtimes, we cannot offer any guarantees that children will not have contact with each other as large groups of children are naturally drawn to each other and despite numerous reminders, they will forget. Children are placed in bubbles with a group of children and members of staff. They will have their break/lunches with this bubble and will not be able to mix with any other adults or children outside these bubbles.

Children must be able to follow the social distancing and hygiene rules to ensure the safety of all children, staff and members of our community. If they are unable to do this, then parents will be asked to keep them at home. If children become distressed and are unable to enter the class on their own, parents will be asked to take them home and can try again the next day.(Please see the school’s COVID-19 Home/school agreement that must be signed before your child can attend).

As I have mentioned earlier this a huge logistical challenge to organise as we also need to prioritise the provision that is in place for our key worker and vulnerable children. We have to keep to our maximum numbers within bubbles and staffing appropriate to the age and needs of each group. Therefore we need to determine exact numbers of children wanting to attend to organise this effectively and safely. I understand that you may need time to consider this and discuss it with your family members. As a result, we will gave all parents until 12pm next Thursday to decide if they would like their child to attend. **If you decide that you do not want a place, you will not be able to change your mind and ask for this after next Thursday** as the groupings will be set with possibly the maximum numbers and cannot be changed.

Please tick the box below to indicate if you would/would not like your child to attend transition. Once we have collated all of the information next Thursday, we will organise the groups and inform you of the dates and times your child will be attending.

On another note, I know many of you are anxious about September and the lack of information that is being released. However, schools have no more information than yourselves on what school will look like after the summer. We are planning for September to be open as usual and everything will be put in place to accommodate this. Further details will probably be released by the government in the coming weeks and over the summer holidays. We will keep you updated with any information as we receive it to ensure you are as prepared as you can be for your child’s return.

Finally, Your child’s class number and teacher is usually sent out with reports in July. As the reports went out in May, this will not happen for this year. If you would like to know your child’s class number and teacher for next year, you can contact the school office from Monday and they will let you know.

Warmest regards

*Mrs Patsy Petrie*

*Headteacher*

*Bankfields Primary School*