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| **Highworth Combined School** |
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| Dear allFurther to the message sent on Tuesday, I am writing to give you more information about how our school will operate for the remainder of the academic year. The governors and I have thought long and hard about how we might be able to invite more children back into school before the Summer Holiday and have sadly concluded that this will not be possible. We made this decision as, quite simply, with the new ways of operating safely, we don’t have enough staff to be able to accommodate children from any further year groups.  I know that this will come as a disappointment to some, and possibly a relief to others who no longer have to make the difficult decision about what is right for them and their child. I also know that everyone, parents, staff and governors, have grave concerns about the impact upon children of this prolonged closure. Children should be in school where they can learn and spend time with friends and there is no doubt that this time away has been detrimental. I believe that the very best way to address these concerns is for our school to start to make plans for the return of all children in September. It is going to be the most challenging term many of us have ever faced, but I know that the amazing team at Highworth have the skill and dedication to deliver the very best of teaching to start to close the gaps in learning that have arisen during these times. I won’t pretend that it will be easy and it won’t happen quickly, but ‘find the gap, close the gap’ is something at which we excel.To this end, the senior leadership team and I have started to plan a curriculum to facilitate the most effective return to school. What we need most is time to work as a whole staff team to ensure that from the very beginning of next term, we are ready to go! I am pleased to say that the Governing Body have approved a plan to facilitate this and I want to let you know of some changes to the school calendar which are reflected on our website:        Friday 10th July will be the last day in school for eligible pupils in Years N, R, 1 and 6        During week commencing 13th July, there will be home learning only for all pupils. There will be 3 matrices provided for each year group, with the usual submission of work to teachers who will provide feedback        Key worker childcare will be available for the week of 13th July        Term will end for all pupils on Friday 17th July. There will be no home learning or Key Worker childcare over the course of the holiday period        School will reopen to pupils on Tuesday 1st September (this, and Wednesday 2nd September, were previously scheduled to be inset days)Preparing a curriculum, teaching and learning for an effective start in September is all within our control. Knowing how schools will be asked to safely reopen is not. For this we are relying on Government guidance, as yet not forthcoming. Buckinghamshire Head Teachers, Governing Bodies, teaching unions and the Local Authority are all lobbying government for early publication. Clearly, knowing what to expect as soon as possible is in all our interests. I will be honest and say that in my opinion, it seems unlikely that a return for all pupils simultaneously is going to be possible. My thoughts at the moment lean towards children spending one week in school, followed by one week of home learning on a rota basis, with half of each class being in school at any one time. This is by no means certain, but it might help you know that this is one option likely to be considered. Please be assured that whatever the new term brings, we will be doing everything that we can to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of your children; we cannot wait to have them back!My very best wishesClare Pankhania |

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