



# DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Friday 12 June 2020

Dear Parents,

The children from Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 have now been back at school for nearly two weeks, and we feel as though they have settled really well into their new schedule. It has been really nice to see how excited they are at the beginning and end of each day, and to hear about all of the interesting things that they are getting up to! I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the teachers, for their imagination in making each day unique and engaging – quite a challenge in these unusual circumstances! I would also like to thank the parents for their support in helping the children to get used to the changes.

After discussion with the teachers, we now feel that we are in a position to safely bring back PE back into the school day. Sport and physical activity are vital for the children's health and mental wellbeing, and we are keen to get it back up and running (pardon the pun) again. PE will take place on the following days for each of the classes:

**Monday** – Reception    **Tuesday** – Year 1    **Wednesday** – Year 6    **Thursday** – Key Worker Class

On their designated day, the group will have exclusive access to the school hall, to prevent mixing of the social bubbles. We have fully risk assessed the activities, and will be adhering to these five rules.

1. Children come in wearing their PE kit on PE days, and remain in it throughout the day.
2. Sports/games will be those in which children can maintain distance from other children. No contact sports.
3. Groups will be using their own sports equipment. Equipment will be wiped down before and after use.
4. All children will wash/sanitise their hands before/ after playing sports.
5. The Hall will be added to the locations on the enhanced cleaning schedule.

We are confident that these activities can take place safely, however if you do not feel comfortable with your child taking part in PE, please let your teacher know.

For the children who are still learning from home, I have attached some suggestions for 'socially-distanced' sporting challenges to this week's achievement assembly. On the topic of home learning, I wanted to express a huge thank you to all of the parents who are still home-schooling their children. I believe that it has now been 12 weeks since school closed for these children, and your resolve has been staggering! It is always fantastic for us to see what the children have been getting up to, so please do keep encouraging them to share their learning with the teachers via the SeeSaw app.

You will have undoubtedly seen the news over the past few days regarding the cancellation of the government's plans to bring back the other year groups to school before the summer holidays. A few eagle-eyed observers will have also noted the small print – the suggestion that schools themselves may choose to bring some of the children back, if they can do so safely.

At Debden, we always strive to do what is best for the children, and would love for all of the children to return to school in some form before summer. However, we genuinely only receive the government announcements as the wider public do – there is no forewarning for schools – and so we have spent some considerable time over the past few days thinking of ways that we can achieve this.

Whilst we are blessed with a good deal of space, there are several other complexities to consider, most notably:

-Each of our classrooms can safely fit around 9-10 children under the guidelines – some of the year groups yet to return have up to 15 children. They would therefore need to be split into two groups, which requires extra rooms and staff;

-One of the principal reasons that the children would like to come back is to spend some time with their teachers, but the teachers are already teaching the groups who have returned. It would be unfair to reduce/remove provision for the other groups (or to cut the teachers in half!)

-Each social bubble needs to have their own entrance/exit points, toilets, and staggered start, finish, breaks and lunchtimes.

We will endeavour to find a way that the children can at least have a short time in school before the summer, even if only to meet their new teacher and experience the 'new normal', but please do not hold us to any promises just yet! We will of course update you as any firm decisions are made.

Thank you for all of your continued support and understanding.

Kind Regards

Matt Hawley

Head of School