



# DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2021

Dear Parents,

Well done to everyone for making it to half term! I am sure that a number of you will be both happy and relieved that the pressures of home-schooling will temporarily cease (if only for a week!) From everyone at the school, our sincerest thanks for all of your care and support of the children's home learning over this extremely challenging half term. Thanks to your efforts, and the sterling work of the teachers and support staff, we feel hopeful that disruption to the children's learning has been minimised as much as is possible, considering the circumstances.

We really hope that the situation is deemed safe enough for us to be able to welcome all children back into the school shortly after half term. As you are aware, the date of 8<sup>th</sup> March has been prospectively pinned by the Prime Minister as a possible return date for primary schools, but as yet I am afraid that I do not have any further information to report on this. This could be a staggered opening for certain year groups, or it could be for all year groups – we simply do not know at the moment (hopefully the latter). We will keep you posted whenever we do receive any firm announcements – although if past occasions are anything to go by, you will probably be told at the same time as us anyway!

We hope that the children (and adults) enjoyed the screen-free day on Wednesday. The children have posted some lovely photos and messages about the things that they got up to on the day, and the few children who are still in school also enjoyed taking part in a number of creative, active and mindfulness-themed activities. There is an increasing body of research suggesting that the increased isolation and technology-based learning that has accompanied the lockdowns is having a significant effect on the wellbeing of lots of different people across society, and so we hope that days such as this provide the children with an opportunity to recharge and think about the other things that are important in life.

Aside from school, there are a lot of support agencies out there for families who are finding this time particularly difficult. I am attaching two information documents from our colleagues at Mind West Essex and Family Lives Essex. The lockdown has also triggered a number of families nationwide to become increasingly concerned about what their children are accessing online. Ms Weetch has kindly sourced this helpful document from CORAM education to guide parents on ensuring internet safety at home: <https://www.coramlifeeducation.org.uk/scarf-at-home-safer-internet-day-special>

On the topic of themed days, World Book Day will be taking place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March this year. Unfortunately, we will almost definitely still be in lockdown for book day this year. However, we are devising a whole host of fun activities and virtual events for the children to take part in – further information on this will follow in the very near future! Another 'Save the Date' is for our virtual disco, being led by our FODS on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February at 5pm for 45 minutes (staff will be in attendance). More info and a zoom link to follow.

We will continue to host the virtual assemblies every Friday after half term. They have been a lovely way to connect as a school at the end of each week. The link will remain the same:

<https://zoom.us/j/97569454304?pwd=U3dsZlppU3RGaVhuRlVrcS9WZWZWRHUT09>

We are also planning to continue welcoming parents to the assemblies via Zoom, even after the children return to school – it is nice for everyone to be able to attend.

All that is left is for me to wish you a lovely half term break. The Kingfishers Class have been learning about the artist Banksy at the moment, and one of the quotes from his works struck me as being particularly pertinent at this time: “If you get tired, learn to rest, not to quit.” I truly hope that everyone manages to get some rest over half term.

We look forward to resuming the remote learning provision on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

Kind Regards

Mr Hawley