



DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Friday 22 May 2020

Dear Parents

It was a pleasure to speak with many of the Frogs and Minnows parents this week, and to hear about how the children are getting on at home. Thank you for all that you are doing to support their learning and their wellbeing, and a big well done to the children for all of their efforts. Once again, we have put together a celebration assembly (attached to this email) which showcases a selection of some of their superb work. Enjoy!

Before giving some details regarding our phased reopening, I would like to say a special thank you to Mrs Arundell this week. Despite having a tough week personally, she has gone out of her way to make things easier for the rest of the team – and always with a smile. She is an absolute rock star!

Phased Reopening – Further Details

As previously communicated, the government has given all primary schools notice that they may be asked to reopen to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children (in addition to key worker children) after half term. In line with our term dates, at Debden this would be from Wednesday 3rd June, subject to government and local authority confirmation of the reopening.

We have spent the past week and a half making comprehensive plans for welcoming the children back to school under the new conditions. Our foremost aims have been to ensure the health, safety, physical and emotional wellbeing of everyone in our school community, in addition to ensuring the best possible standards of education for both the children coming into school and those learning from home. Our plans have now been approved by our governing body, staff and health and safety advisors, and so I am able to share the outline details with you.

Overview: Our school will operate as four distinct 'social bubble' groups (Reception, Year 1, Year 6 and children of key workers) of no more than 15 people (including staff). Each group will have their own learning spaces, entry/exit points and toilet facilities. They will be consistently staffed by the same teachers and classroom assistants. Start times, finish times, breaks and lunches will be staggered, so that no two groups will ever come into contact with one another.

Weekly Offer: For the Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 classes, we are offering full-time provision from Monday to Thursday - on Friday the school will be closed to these children. This is so that teachers can continue to provide a high standard of provision for children who are home learning. For at least the first week, Reception children will only attend in the mornings, to allow them to transition back into school and the new-look environment.

As is statutory, the key worker group will continue to run on Fridays. Please note, however that the key worker group will contain children of all ages, and thus will not necessarily be staffed by your child's class teacher. In this group, staff will supervise children completing the home learning activities, unlike the formal schooling offered in the other groups.

Classroom Layout: As you may have seen in the media, schools are taking a number of measures to ensure that children within groups are socially distanced, and that classrooms are as safe as they can be. We too have had to take a number of these measures, although we have endeavoured to adopt a common-sense approach, balancing safety with the children's emotional and psychological wellbeing – we certainly don't want them to be educated in prison cells! In place of the achievement assembly next week, we shall be sending a communication directly to the children, preparing them for how school will look when they attend.

Cleaning and Hygiene: We will continue to frequently promote good hygiene, including regular hand washing, and using hand sanitiser stations when entering and exiting rooms etc. Our cleaning team will be following an

enhanced cleaning schedule, including disinfecting all surfaces on a daily basis, emptying all bins, in addition to deep cleaning the whole building on a Friday afternoon/ evening. Staff in each group will also be provided with cleaning materials. Staff will not be wearing PPE, except when applying first aid, or where there is a suspected case of the virus. In these instances, staff have been provided with a clear set of procedures to minimise any spread inside the school. Of course, parents would be communicated with promptly, and groups/ areas of the school would need to be swiftly closed.

Getting to/from School: We are encouraging upper KS2 children to make their own way to school, should their parents feel that they are mature enough to do so. For the younger year groups, only one parent will be able to bring them and collect them from school. Unfortunately, the bus from the Barracks will not be running at this time, as it would be unable to facilitate both the staggered starts and the social distancing rules. We have been in touch with the army liaison team, who are looking to set up a series of walking buses.

Attendance: A reminder that we will not be putting any pressure on any parents for their child to attend throughout this time – it is a decision that is personal to every family, and we shall certainly not be imposing any penalties. However, we would appreciate knowing in advance which children are planning to attend, as this would help us to ensure that groups are staffed safely. If we have not heard from you already, you will receive an email asking you to confirm if your child shall be attending school next week.

There have been literally hundreds of complexities that we have needed to consider over the past few weeks, and there is certainly too much information for me to adequately communicate in one go! I hope that this outline, however, has helped to give you a little more of an idea of how school will function when we do return.

Further details, including site maps, transport information, specific timings, what equipment children will need, staffing, entry and exit points, and a comprehensive FAQs document, will be sent to the parents of all eligible children early next week.

Today signals the start of half term, and so please do try to enjoy the next few days spending time together, relaxing, and having fun!

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards

Matt Hawley

Head of School