

9th July 2020

Dear Parents,

I would like to start this week's letter giving you information about a very special event. Tomorrow evening at 5:00pm Y6 production of 'Pirates of the Curry Bean' from Musicline publications will be broadcast on the radio. This can be accessed at <http://player.broadcastradio.com/radio-dacorum> or from the link at <http://www.radiodacorum.org.uk/> or by saying 'Hey Google / Siri / Alexa stream Radio Dacorum on Tuneln'. This is the first time that our children have ever done a radio broadcast of a play, and Y6 children and staff have worked extremely hard on this over the past few weeks. For very obvious reasons we were not able to perform a KS2 production this year, and we are very grateful to Radio Dacorum for their support and help in making this a special event for our children. I am sure you will enjoy it. As it is broadcast via the internet it can be accessed from anywhere in the world, and so grandparents and other family members will be able to listen in from wherever they may be.

As you will be aware, the Government announced last week that all children in England will be expected to return to school in September. I am still working through the fine details and considering the implications for the coverage of the curriculum from the documentation from the Department for Education, but I can give you some headlines.

Firstly, the children will be returning in September to a full class size learning group based in one classroom, and will have their class teacher and support staff working with them. Staff will not be moving between classes as they have done previously, following instruction to minimise contact between groups as much as is possible. The classroom layout will be different as we implement the guidance to keep the children as safe as possible.

Secondly, we will continue to prioritise the emotional and mental well-being of the children whilst looking to ensure their learning is secure and moving forward. The aim is that by Easter – future situations permitting – all children have gained the knowledge and skills they need to be attaining at their expected standard had their progress not been interrupted by the pandemic.

Thirdly, we are required to continue to have a staggered start and end to the day, with staggered break and lunch-times for the children. The one-way system will continue as adults still have to maintain appropriate social distance. The arrival and departure times have been reviewed as we return to class groups, and will be as follows to avoid corridor congestion:

September Year group	Arrival window	Pick up arrival not before	Pick up dismissal
R	8:55 – 9:00	2:55	3:00
1	8:50 – 8:55	2:50	2:55
2	8:45 – 8:50	2:45	2:50
3	8:35 – 8:40	2:35	2:40
4	8:40 – 8:45	2:40	2:45
5	8:30 – 8:35	2:30	2:35
6	8:25 – 8:30	2:25	2:30

I am aware that many of you will be returning to pre-lockdown working practices. Following the guidance from the DfE, I am asked to request that you limit the number of child care providers you access as far as possible, as this is in line with the recommendations to minimise contacts as much as we can in our daily lives. You should seek assurance that any such provider is carefully considering their own protective measures and can demonstrate this to you. Childminders will be able to drop off and collect children from multiple classes, as parents can, and we will be working closely with the childminders to share names and information so that we can help to keep everyone as safe as we can. Childminders will also be caring for children from more than one family. The DfE is clear that any measures we can take – even partially – will help to limit outbreaks of the virus. We are in discussion with The Future Starz (formerly Game) who provide our Morning Activity Club, with a view to that re-starting in September. I will let you know the outcome of those discussions as soon as possible.

Fourthly, the Government now advises that clothing does not need to be washed more frequently than required, and so the children will need to be in uniform in September. We have also taken the decision to continue to allow trainers as an alternative to school shoes. For the return in September we will allow trainers of any colour as at present, but please purchase black at the next size in line with our shoe policy. Thank you.

Lastly, some practicalities: the children will continue to require their own stationery; they will continue to have packed lunch (either from home or from school as you wish); classes will not be allowed to intermingle, so there will be no assemblies other than class assemblies; additional curricular provision is yet to be determined, but will be much more limited than we have been able to offer in the past; outdoor PE will be taught but will be non-contact sport only – the children will require their PE kit; library books will again be available; and some day visits may be possible over the year.

Understandably all of the above is subject to change at short notice dependent upon the Government guidance at the time, and the viral activity in the population. We hope to be able to offer the children as near to normal a school experience as we can. The Government are planning an update in mid-August, and should there be additional information you need to know I will send a summer communication. Otherwise I hope to 'leave you in peace'.

It has been our custom to end our school terms at 1:30pm, as shown on the school calendar. (I must admit that updating the calendar has not been a priority over recent months for which I apologise.) Given the necessity for staggered collection, we have taken the decision that the last day of term – Tuesday 21st July – will be our new normal times and your children will be able to be collected between 2:30pm and 3:00pm. I trust that this does not cause anyone a problem.

The children have adapted to all the new routines so well – I am incredibly proud of them. We look forward to working with them over the next week and a half prior to the holiday period.

Mrs K. Tamlyn
Head Teacher