



Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Friday 12th June 2020

Dear parents and carers,

DJS OPENING UPDATE – JUNE/JULY 2020

As you know the government announcement on June 9th told us all that the expectation of schools opening so that all children return for 4 weeks before the summer holidays, had been dropped. This is because of the difficulty of social distancing in a school environment. However, it also said that schools that had the space and capacity to enable wider opening safely, following government guidelines, could do so.

YEAR 5:

I believe that DJS does currently have spare capacity (both staff and rooms) to open two further bubbles safely and our proposal is that we open up to all children in year 5 to return on a part-time basis. Our rationale for choosing year 5 over the other year groups is that they will have less time in school to catch up before their transfer to secondary school at the end of year 6.

For those parents who have children in year 5 please see the separate proposal letter. **Please note that this is currently at the proposal/consultation stage and this is it entirely possible that the government will announce further guidance in the future which will mean that these plans in the end cannot go ahead.**

With these two groups up and running, the school building and staffing will be at full capacity. Every room in the school with external doors will have a bubble of children in it: five year 6 bubbles, five key worker children bubbles and the four new part time year 5 bubbles which takes us to 180 children and all available staff. Until the government says that the 2m rule can be reduced in schools, we will sadly be unable to bring back any more children. In addition, if and when this is relaxed, undoing our current plan of bubbles/rooms/staffing to create a new set up without compromising on safety, will be an issue to work through carefully.

TRANSITION PLANNING:

However, on Fridays the school will be working on transition arrangements (including our new year 3 children), with the aim of all children being able to spend time with their new class teachers on Friday 10th July and Friday 17th July in small groups. Details of these arrangements will be sent out to you in due course. For children with SEND we will also be working on additional transition arrangements on the other Fridays as well.

For this reason, the school has decided not to open to year 6 on Friday mornings. (This was due to start next Friday 19th June.)

HOME LEARNING:

Whilst our current home learning activities on the website were our immediate response to the lockdown, this is not enough in the long term and we are currently exploring a number of platforms in order to be ready to deliver on-line teaching early in the Autumn term. The school has been using Zoom and more recently Microsoft Teams for meetings and training activities throughout lockdown, and as you know we have also been using the Seesaw platform to enable classes to maintain contact with one another. (Please email us if you require the login code again.) We will also have to provide additional support to those families who don't have good enough access to any suitable hardware to access on-line teaching. Future education is important, as well as making sure that the school can operate safely for all children.



SEPTEMBER:

It is currently very difficult to predict what school will look like in September. I want to reassure you that the school is working on two plans: one is normal school, the other is a combination of all children regularly spending some time in school as well as time at home following up on lessons taught. I met recently (at a social distance) the new Head Teacher, Mr Andy Clarke, and together we will be working on future plans.

I understand how the recent government announcement was frustrating and worrying for all of you as this will mean that some children will not have attended school for several months. I want to reassure you that when children return to the school, the school and the teachers will be able to adapt their plans and their teaching to enable all children to catch up, whatever year group they are in. I have complete faith and trust in the teaching profession that schools will be able to do that next year (and little faith in the government's intended 'summer catch-up programme', but perhaps I should not have typed that out loud!)

Best wishes and thank you for all your messages of support.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Viner
Head Teacher

IMPORTANT DATES:

- The school has moved its INSET day to Wednesday 22nd July.
- Year 6 children: please keep the evening of Tuesday 21st July free! We are making plans for a special safe farewell event for you. More details to follow...
- **Reminder: (non-key worker) Year 6 bubbles will NOT run on Fridays.**

