



# Denmead Junior School

Building success, inspiring curiosity

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Head Teacher

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Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all safe and well and are looking forward to a different type of Easter break. Your children have done really well to transition back happily into the school routines, which are so important in terms of establishing a sense of normality, and as a consequence, a sense of well-being. They will have deserved a break, as many of them have probably found it quite challenging to maintain the efforts of what is, a relatively long school day. On our part, we have tried to create in some aspects, a different type of school day, with more frequent opportunities for physical exercise and outdoor learning, which I know first-hand, the children have both enjoyed and appreciated.

After the Easter break, we will revert back to a more familiar timetable for PE and Games but the children can continue to wear 50/50 uniform split, regardless of whether it is a PE day or not, which will hopefully keep things simple for all.

Behind the scenes, we have been meeting with the infant school regularly, to discuss all range of matters that might affect both schools. I am really enjoying working with Ms Clabon and feel we are very like-minded in our aspirations for our Denmead community. I think this type of working relationship can only bode well for the future; two, strong, independent schools, working together for the benefit of all our children and families. We have been in particular, discussing transition arrangements, which whilst familiar, will look slightly different this year.

We have also been able to discuss INSET days for next academic year and they will be as follows:

## INSET days for 2021-2022

Thursday 2nd September 2021

Friday 3rd September 2021

Friday 22nd October 2021

Friday 18th February 2022

Monday 27th June 2022

We always try to ensure that as many dates as possible match those at Denmead Infant School. On this occasion all five dates do coincide, which should be helpful for those families that have siblings in both schools.

The one significant area that school will look distinctly different next year, is that we have made the decision to move back into discrete year groups. Therefore, from September, there will be three year 3 classes, three year 4 classes, three year 5 classes and three year 6 classes. Discussions have been ongoing for a number of weeks now discussing this new arrangement and it was felt that given the impact of Covid in particular, that grouping the children in a chronological structure would be more beneficial in meeting a range of needs. One of the significant benefits of the current mixed-age structure was that the older children in the class would provide supportive role-modelling for the younger ones, which we will miss, however we are already looking into ways in which this can be mitigated.

I hope you will be supportive of this change, as from the parental feedback that we have received, both in the questionnaire in December and anecdotally out on the playground, for a number of you, this will be a positive change. I have to say, having seen both structures, there are definite benefits to both models and it wasn't as straight-forward a decision as some of you might think. Nonetheless, it is an exciting new development.



We have been able to seek some clarity this week, given last Friday's announcement by the government, around our residential trip programme. We managed to secure a booking with PGL in Tregoyd in the first week of July so that our Year 6's don't miss out this year and have something that they can look forward to in their final summer term with us. *A letter will be coming out shortly to year 6.*

Similarly, although we had to move the Calshot visit for our current year 4's booked after Easter, we have now secured a date in October (the week before half-term) for them to attend, even though by that time they will be in Year 5. *Do look for the letter coming out shortly regarding this, Year 4.*

The year 4 visit to Calshot the following year in April 2022 (for current year 3's) will proceed as planned – *look for the letter coming out after Easter, Year 3.*

We have also secured a July date for 2022 for PGL Tregoyd, to ensure that our current Year 5's still have their year 6 trip to look forward to as well – again, *do look for the letter with full details coming out after Easter, Year 5.*

Unfortunately, the Bushcraft trip, which we were hoping to proceed with, late in the summer term, has had to be cancelled due to the centre not being Covid secure, and with no plan for this changing on the centre's part. *The families that are affected by this can expect to receive a letter later this afternoon regarding refund arrangements.*

Thank you to all of you who have been able to contribute to our new library fund, your kind generosity in these difficult times is much appreciated and will be well spent. I hope to update you further on our library plan after Easter.

And on a final note, I have been chatting with children about whether or not to include an April Fools joke in my newsletter today, and asking them for advice as to what they thought appropriate to try and fool you with! You will be pleased to know that I have not followed any of their ideas which ranged from telling that there was a zombie apocalyptic outbreak in school, to a proposed two year 'lockdown'!

However, I was struck by this story on the BBC website, which looks like an Aprils Fool joke but is in fact true...

*"An eco-friendly hair salon is planning to use customers' hair to help clean up the ocean. Salon owner Gemma Hill, who is to open Luvely in Dalkeith, Midlothian, later this month, said: "Hair doesn't absorb water but it does absorb oil." After having a haircut, customers' locks will be collected and used to make booms for soaking up coastal oil spills."*

Right, I'm off to get my hair clippers. I'll start in year 3 and work my way up!

Have a lovely Easter break, enjoy yourselves but please stay safe.

We'll see you all back on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April.

*G. Clarke.*

**Mr Andy Clarke**

**Head Teacher**



## **IMPORTANT: MONITORING COVID DURING THE HOLIDAYS:**

As in previous school holidays, we will remain on duty and contactable after today as the last day of teaching in order to allow any positive COVID-19 cases to be identified and confirmed by a test and for 'close contacts' to be identified and contacted.

**It is essential that you inform us of any test taken AND THE RESULT as soon as possible following the guidelines set out below. Please remember if ANYONE in your household shows symptoms, the rest of the household should self-isolate immediately while a test is booked and you all follow the appropriate guidance following the test result received.**

- If your child develops symptoms **within 48 hours of being in school**, and then tests positive for COVID-19, you should contact the school via [admin.office@denmead-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:admin.office@denmead-jun.hants.sch.uk) as soon as possible, up **until 3.15pm on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**. Please do not phone, as the school office will not be open.
- If your child develops symptoms and subsequently tests positive for COVID-19 **later than 48 hours** since last being in school (**i.e. AFTER 3.15pm on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February**), school should **NOT** be contacted and you should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace instead.

Should we be informed of a positive case following symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, we will need to identify 'close contacts' of that person and we will email you if your child is identified as such. Your child will then need to self-isolate for 10 days from the last point of contact with the confirmed case.

## **KEY COMMUNICATIONS SENT OUT THIS WEEK:**

### **Key emails sent regarding:**

- Uniform delivery pending – orders to be processed as soon as possible
- Year 5 – Bikeability registration letter – to be completed online by Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April please
- **New menu for after Easter**
- Mr Stapleton on paternity leave (Ireland class) after the holidays
- Curriculum newsletters – coming out shortly

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

- **Holiday club running with ABC during the Easter holidays:** Contact Ashley for further information via [ashleybarkercoaching1@gmail.com](mailto:ashleybarkercoaching1@gmail.com)

### **AFTER EASTER BREAK:**

- **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April** – First day back
- **Year 5 Bikeability** – course begins in school on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April

