



# Dean Bank Primary and Nursery School

**Believe, Achieve, Soar with Pride**

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Head Teacher: Mrs P Northcott  
Deputy Head Teacher Miss K Potts  
Chair of Governors: Mr J Davison

21st September 2020

Dear parents / carers,

We are being made aware of several positive Covid 19 Cases in our local community with several schools being affected so I would like to reassure you about some of the measures we have taken since the beginning of term.

Thank you for your continued support in getting all pupils back into school safely over the past month. All of us are committed to providing the best education possible for your child, while securing the health and safety of our whole school community. Thank you for continuing to follow public health guidelines and encouraging your children to do the same.

You are already aware of the steps we have put in place to ensure the safe return of all pupils to school. We know that you will be keen to understand the impact that we have had in our first weeks of the term, and what our plans are to ensure all pupils catch up with any missed learning, and what will happen if a pupil or pupil is asked to stay at home over the coming months.

That is why I am writing to you today in order to keep you fully informed. This letter will also be published openly on our website and is being sent to our governors / trustees.

<b>School reopening</b>	<p>We have altered the school day to ensure Mr Hale (caretaker) can be on the premises all day to support with ongoing cleaning and sanitising.</p> <p>Breakfast club is now from 8:30 in classrooms.</p> <p>The school day has 3 start and finishing times to support social distancing.</p> <p>Break times are staggered to ensure toilets can be cleaned between children accessing them.</p> <p>Lunchtimes have 4 different start and finishing times with children being expected to stay in their section of the yard with their identified mid-day supervisor.</p> <p>No after school clubs are currently being run to ensure staff have time to mark work at school and leave the building by 4:30, Mr Hale's finishing time.</p> <p>Teaching Assistants are based in consistent learning bubbles.</p> <p>Senior leaders are not accessing learning bubbles and all staff are encouraged to maintain social distancing in staff rooms and class rooms.</p> <p>When children are deliberately breaking their learning bubble, parents have been contacted and there are consequences to this behaviour.</p>
<b>Attendance</b>	<p>We were really happy to get our children back into school and know you understand that attendance is a continual battle for us at Dean Bank for a range of reasons. Most children have come back to school and, even with 'sniffles and snuffles', have been in school and are able to access their learning. We have some children in Early Years where parents have been more reluctant to bring their children in and we are doing everything to reassure parents that children are better off in school and sharing all the measures we have put in place. We are also aware that some children are not</p>

	<p>attending our school as they are waiting to access other schools due to house moves but are still on our records as they have not been admitted yet.</p> <p>We work very closely with the Local Authority to ensure are children are safe and well and follow up closely any children who are not attending school. We do however continue to have parents who keep their children off for holidays or ‘occasional’ days with no reason for this.</p> <p>Children have missed enough education and we will continue to be as diligent regarding attendance as we have always been.</p> <p>We will continue to put attendance figures on our newsletters and will be sharing several new exciting initiatives that we are introducing this year on our newsletter this week.</p>
<p><b>Coverage of the curriculum</b></p>	<p>During the first 3 days and first full week, staff spent a lot of time talking to children about returning to school and how they felt and had coped. We have carefully planned a recovery curriculum for the year to look at what children missed in the summer term and how this might be taught and curriculum priorities agreed.</p> <p>We believe in a balanced curriculum at Dean Bank and strive to give our children a range of experiences in all subjects; however, I strongly feel that unless children can access maths and read and write then they will be disadvantaged as they move through life.</p> <p>To ensure we ‘catch up’ on these areas of the curriculum , teachers have tweaked timetables to make lessons generally shorter and so we can put in during the week extra English and Maths lessons.</p> <p>We are limited to interventions that can be carried out so teachers are generally teaching the whole class as opposed to small groups of children being supported by a Teaching Assistant.</p> <p>We still intend to assess our children but have set realistic targets to ensure all staff are clear of the expectations this year and it is manageable for pupils.</p>
<p><b>Remote learning March - July 2020</b></p>	<p>We appreciate how difficult it was to home school children and I had many conversations with parents about lack of computers, tablets, internet so we made the decision as a school that the best way to support both children and parents was to produce work packs that parents could collect, as well as teachers sending out ‘class recommended’ websites and posing these on our school social media and class dojo sites.</p> <p>This was done on a fortnightly basis with staff giving feedback daily if work was returned electronically.</p> <p>I know many parents appreciate this but we know it is not ideal and many parents just felt unable to support their children.</p> <p>We are aware that parents did their best and we will try to pick up and support children from where they are but understand there will be gaps in children’s knowledge and that some children completed work every day and some children, unfortunately did very little work. This means that many children have come back to school and there is a big difference in where they are at academically. Our staff are great at supporting children by breaking down learning into small steps but we do need your help in supporting children as they bring home reading books, spelling and times tables to learn.</p>

<p><b>Remote learning in the future</b></p>	<p>We will be in the same situation again if we are told individuals, families or bubbles are told to self-isolate.</p> <p>Staff already have work planned that will be dropped off if this is the case. We will deliver the work packs on day one, collect on day five and deliver the next pack and collect on day 10. This work will be expected to be completed unlike the previous home schooling. Teachers are planning work which is relevant to the learning now or what children need to support their catch up so we cannot afford pupils to miss any education.</p> <p>If children are ill and not just isolating because they have been in close contact we still expect the work to be completed as it will be able to be done once they feel up to it and children's symptoms do not last long but their isolation has to.</p>
<p><b>Mental health and wellbeing</b></p>	<p>We continue to have times in the day when teachers discuss how children are feeling and because of learning bubbles all teachers and Teaching Assistants are spending break times with pupils when they can have 'little individual chats' when they are checking in with their pupils.</p> <p>We are finding however that the majority of our children just want things to be as normal as can be and we are taking their lead on this.</p>

We have been asked to remind parents and carers that our local lockdown means families should not be meeting in or outside of each other's homes and that children should be being dropped off and picked up by a member of their own household or support bubble. I understand that this is will be very challenging.

Thank you for your support in these challenging times. Please remember to follow both the school's guidance and public health guidance to keep everyone learning safely.

Kind Regards

Pauline Northcott