

21st April 2020

Dear Year 6 Parents / Carers,

We hope this letter finds you and your family well with the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in amid the Coronavirus pandemic. These continue to be very challenging times. Being part of a wider community and family is more important now than ever. With this in mind, we are going to start our communication around Year 6 transition early this year. This will enable us to gather information sooner and provide more time for us to build up our relationship with parents and carers, just in case our usual face-to-face induction events are unable to go ahead.

So far, you have made your choice to join the DEC family and you have secured a place for your child. Congratulations! We had over 1250 applications this year and our catchment area has shrunk to its smallest ever at 1.7km. We have countless appeals to hear during the Summer Term and over 250 families on our waiting list.

You will have also received your 'Welcome Pack' containing a series of forms to fill in and return. We understand this may not be possible during lockdown so we have provided alternative ways for information to be submitted. In normal times, parents, carers and pupils often have many questions about transition to secondary school. There will be even more this year as schools are currently closed and social distancing rules make everything we take for granted more difficult. Here we hope to provide some initial communication in the form of reassuring answers to some common questions.

1. How will Induction Evening and Induction Day work during school closure?

We are unclear for how long schools will remain closed. If school closures look likely to continue through to June and face-to-face induction events cannot go ahead as they would normally, we will set up a series of induction activities for new Year 7 form tutors to complete with pupils electronically. In addition, we will provide a range of videos and virtual tours of the school to help pupils become familiar with the location of key places on the school site. Heads of Houses will also set up contact systems to facilitate parental induction.

For now, please take a look at our website induction page: www.decschool.co.uk/induction

2. Can I buy uniform ready for September?

Yes. Kids Essentials stock our blazers, jumpers and ties. The rest can be purchased from most high street shops and supermarkets. The specific requirements for DEC uniform can be found on our website. Obviously, buying things too early is not advised due to the rate of growth most 11 year olds experience over the summer!

3. What forms do I need to fill in and how do I return them?

The introduction pack with necessary forms was posted out before school closures were announced. Thank you for the ones received so far. You can either return your forms by post or, if it is easier, complete our new online forms. These provide the same information and come directly to us. To complete the online forms, simply click here: www.decschool.co.uk/induction

4. How will information from Primary School be passed to DEC during school closures?

We have developed an electronic form for your child's primary school to complete. These will be sent out and as information is received, we may need to call you to discuss anything specific. This information will be invaluable to us for September planning.



5. What should I do if I have questions or need guidance?

Simply email enquiry@decschool.co.uk and we will ensure the right person gets in touch. No question is a silly question – we encourage new parents to speak to us so you feel clear ahead of September.

6. Will Summer School still go ahead?

We would like it to and as long as schools are open in time, we will do our best to run Summer School. The provisional dates are 28th, 29th and 30th July. Depending on the situation with Coronavirus, this is of course subject to change. We will provide more details nearer the time.

7. How will my child's timetable be set up without SATs information?

We will receive detailed information from each Primary school on the SATs levels that teachers felt were most likely to be achieved this summer for your child. We also carry out a series of baseline tests in September to benchmark key skills such as reading, numeracy, spelling and grammar. This year we will do additional base line tests in some other subjects to ensure we have as much detail as possible on your child's starting points. Though many subjects in Year 7 are taught in mixed ability setting, this will enable us to review their sets at October half term and make adjustments were necessary. It will also provide the most detailed picture for their teachers to plan to meet their needs and provide the most appropriate level of stretch and challenge.

8. What specific transition activities will take place for SEN pupils?

We believe that transfer from primary to secondary school should be a positive experience for all pupils, particularly those identified as SEN. Therefore, we use a range of strategies to support the smooth transfer of your child from their current primary school to DEC. We normally provide additional taster sessions on one afternoon per week over a 5-week period during the Summer Term for those children who might benefit from extra reassurance. Here, parents/carers are invited to attend on the first and last session to meet the Inclusion Team and share information. We will also provide a 'buddy' for your child, who will be available pre and post-transfer. The Inclusion Team will work closely with all primary schools to jointly plan and share more detailed information about your child's attainment, additional interventions and provision which has been most effective. If schools are open during the Summer Term, then a member of staff from DEC will visit your child in school.

We will continually monitor the situation over the coming weeks and adapt to meet the changing circumstances. Indeed, we may be able to offer a smaller SEN group session via a Coffee Morning if required, and ask your child to produce a one-page profile or passport so that they can have a 'voice' in the information sharing process. We will, of course, provide as much information as possible during this time, be it 'virtually' or face-to-face.

We hope that the information above, together with that on our new website induction page, is useful. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M. Dunn
Head Teacher