

Bradley Salisbury

Fri 22/05/2020

Dear Parents,

I am writing on the last day of the half term and looking back with a slight sense of disbelief over just how much has changed since the end of last term. So many of the things that we took for granted and which we thought were essential pillars of our community have been challenged. As is so often the case, when things are removed it creates space for fresh life and that has been a strong theme at Dean Close this term. Every week, I am hearing about teachers learning brand new skills to help deliver complex content to their online classes. Pupils are sharing new skills they have learned. Many of us reconnecting with old fashioned ideas such as staying at the table after a meal for a conversation, creating rotas for household chores and the rebirth of the family classic "Dean Close Monopoly" (editions of which are still available from the school office for a very reasonable price).

I hope that you will be able to find time to watch this week's Headmaster's Assembly to hear some of next year's pupil leaders. Over the next few weeks, I am hoping that all of the Lower Sixth will take a good hard look at Dean Close School and identify areas where they think they can make a difference. This year, we benefited from so much that the Upper Sixth took up as a cause and I hope that this will continue and grow next year. Academic subjects, the environment, international pupils, food and Sixth Form Social events all need a pupil champion to add a fresh approach.

At this stage, there are two things that I would like to highlight:

1. **U6th Prepare Programme** - in the mailing you should be able to find a 21 page document outlining all of the webinars and events that are available for this year's U6th leavers. We have never put something like this together before but it speaks volumes about the creativity and commitment of my colleagues. I hope that the year group will not only buy into all that is being provided for them but that they will look back on this half term and see that it played a key role in helping them to get ready for the next stage.
2. **September for boarders** - after half term we will be adding much more detail to our provision for pupils returning to board in September. It is clear to us all that the situation is constantly changing, but based on the current situation, we know we can:
 - Provide an onsite quarantine facility for 14 days before the start of term.
 - Actively support learning for pupils who are not able to return in September.
 - Allow boarders, who choose to, to remain on site during the exeat weekends in the first term.
 - Create a space for pupils who are poorly to be well looked after in isolation, should the need arise.
 - Allow pupils who would like to wear face coverings to do so.

In every decision that we are making at the moment we are placing the health of our pupils, staff and community as the number one priority. This may result in us having to find ever creative solutions to the challenges we face, but we are not alone in that. We are fortunate to have the support of some excellent industry advice groups, great relationships with other schools with whom we are sharing best practice and a superb network of well-connected friends.

Thank you for your continued support as a parent body, I cannot tell you much my colleagues and I have appreciated all of the messages we have received. I hope that you are able to find a different pace for family life next week.

Yours sincerely,

Bradley Salisbury

Mr B J Salisbury
Headmaster

Dean Close School, Shelburne Road, Cheltenham, Glos, GL51 6HE
(01242) 258000 | bjsalisbury@deanclose.org.uk