



Friday 20th August 2020

Dear Parents and Pupils,

This letter is the first that I am writing to all of the parents and pupils who will be starting the year at Dean Close School in just over two weeks' time. With a full school, a superb staff team in place and some new skills learned during lockdown, it is exciting to be reopening after too long a gap in school activity on our site here in Cheltenham. Before we start the new year, on behalf of all my colleagues, I want to say a huge thank you for all the Dean Close pupils and parents who were with us last year. Your support, encouragement and input has helped us to be in such a strong position as we look forward to all that lies ahead.

This lengthy communication is intended to provide an overview of many of our plans for the coming term. Most of which are small and will quickly become part of our routine. To help with the digestion of all that is needed to ensure that we can operate as well and as safely as we can, this general letter will be followed up with area specific details from my senior colleagues.

- Monday 24th August - Logistics/Operations – Andrew Hall (Deputy Head)
- Wednesday 26th August - Pastoral & Health – Jacquie Davis (Deputy Head Pastoral)
- Friday 28th August - Academic – James Hole (Deputy Head Academic)
- Tuesday 1st September - Co-curricular – Andrew Hall (Deputy Head)
- Wednesday 3rd September - Spiritual - John Ash (Chaplain)

The most significant change for this term is a temporary move away from cross year group houses to single or dual year group houses. The reasons for this are outlined later in the letter. This is going to take some getting used to and more detailed updates will seek to address some of the specific questions that may arise for you.

If you have a question, please send it to headmaster@deanclose.org.uk and we can add it to our FAQs section that will accompany each mailing.

I hope that you find this initial document reassuring and that over the next two weeks, that we can address any concerns that you or your family may have.

Yours sincerely,

Bradley Salisbury

Headmaster
headmaster@deanclose.org.uk

Dean Close School Reopening - Pupils

September 2020

Our overarching aim is for everyone in our community to flourish. To have a life in all its fullness.



A safe environment in which to live and learn.



Providing continuity of access to teachers and coaches who are experts in their field.



Pupils positively engaging with one another and investing in their spiritual, moral and emotional lives.



Being exposed to cultural ideas from beyond the pupils' immediate experience



Access to physical activity that will help them stay well.



Good food, health care and spaces.

Dean Close School is determined to do all that it can to help our pupils and staff to flourish. The global Covid-19 pandemic means that we need to make some changes to achieve this. There are two overarching strategies, both of which are informed by UK Government guidelines.

1. Do all we can to prevent the virus from entering our school.
2. Limit the number of that each person has close contact with.



Prevention



1. Preventing individuals with symptoms, or from a household with symptoms, from attending school.

- All pupils will be required to have a **daily symptom check** before the start of the school day. This will take place in house for boarding pupils and at home for all day pupils. Any pupil displaying symptoms will not be allowed into school until they have been tested and given the all clear.
- Day pupils with symptoms must stay at home and contact **NHS Track and Trace**.
- Boarding pupils will remain in their **isolation room** organised through Houses and the school Health Centre.
- All staff are required to follow the same protocol as the pupils.



2. Clean hands more often.

- In addition to our normal facilities, temporary, **outside hand washing facilities** have been provided in key areas.
- Clear guidelines will be published and regular reminders given. Focusing on meal times, movement around school and use of toilet facilities.
- There will be **hand gel in every classroom** and entrances to shared spaces.



3. Catch it, bin it, kill it.

- There will be boxes of tissues in every classroom and house.
- Bins are lined and will be emptied twice a day



4. Enhanced cleaning.

- Classrooms – In addition to the daily clean through, sanitiser spray, cloths and gloves will enable a wipe down of desks in between lessons.
- Touch surfaces e.g. door handles and toilets will be cleaned on a constant cycle. Two or three times in the morning and two or three times in the afternoon.
- There will be check sheets to confirm that cleaning has taken place. And to provide reassurance.
- Houses - every house cleaned daily with additional sanitiser spray readily available and touch surfaces frequently cleaned.



Minimising contact and maintaining social distancing

In line with the guidance from the Government, pupils will be placed in year group bubbles, with additional controls within those year groups. The aim is to limit the number of pupils who are coming into close contact with each other so that we can minimise disruption that would result from a positive test. It will also enable the atmosphere in the boarding houses to be more relaxed, as they will form the equivalent of a household.



Houses

For at least the first term, day pupils will all be placed in single year group, co-ed houses.

- Alder House - Fourth Form (Year 9) – Mrs Milne (based in Hatherley)
- Willow House - Remove (Year 10) – Mr Price (based in Dale)
- Elm House - Fifth Form (Year 11) – Mrs Montgomery (based in Mead)
- Hawthorn House - Lower Sixth (Year 12) – Mr Montgomery (based in Field)
- Juniper House - Upper Sixth (Year 13) – Mr Milne (based in Old Mead)

Boarding pupils will also be placed in year groups, but these will be single sex houses. The layout of the larger houses enables us to have two groups in one house and maintain separation.

Where there are two year groups in a house, they will make use of separate facilities.

- Lime House - Fourth Form and Upper Sixth Girls – Mrs Feltham (based in Fawley)
- Beech House – Fourth and Fifth Form Boys – Mr Poxon (based in Tower)
- Rowan House – Remove and Lower Sixth Boys – Mr Pitt (based in Brook Court)

- Oak House - Remove and Lower Sixth Girls – Mrs Ledlie (based in Shelburne)
- Pine House - Fifth Form Girls – Mrs Allen (based in Turner)
- Yew House – Upper Sixth Boys – Mr Wilkes (based in Gate)



Lessons

- With the exception of one or two classes that meet in larger classrooms, all classes will be capped at a maximum of 18.
- The rooms will be arranged so that all pupils face the front.
- Seating plans will be deployed that maintain the in-year group bubbles.



Movement around school

An increased gap of 10 minutes in between lessons will allow for:

- Effective one way systems
- Time to wipe down and ventilate classrooms in between groups



Dining Hall

- The hall has been divided into two sections with space for one year group in each.
- There will be marks on each table that will identify safe, social distancing.
- At lunchtime, in addition to the normal provision, there will be a “Grab and Go” snack lunch option.



Transport to and from school

- Lift sharing between families should be avoided, wherever possible.
- As many pupils as possible should walk or cycle to and from school.



Large gatherings

- Social gatherings with parents will be limited to approx. 30 people at a time.
- Year groups will have one Chapel service and one Year Group assembly each week.
- We will not be able to sing in Chapel for the time being.



Face coverings

- Face coverings will be required when moving around the school in between lessons and activities.
- In lessons, coverings are permitted but not compulsory.
- All pupils should return to school with at least 5 washable face masks or a supply of disposable masks.



Uniform

- Uniform will be as normal, with ties optional for the first three weeks.



Michaelmas term Exeats and Half Term

- During this term, all boarding pupils will be able to stay in school over the Exeat weekends and Half Term break, if they need to.



Parties

- All parties involving DCS pupils, but taking place outside of school, should conform with the Government's guidelines. No permission will be given by boarding houses for a pupil to attend a party that does not adhere to the guidelines at the time. The current guidelines are:
 - Indoors – groups from two households
 - Outdoors – up to 6 individuals from different households



Response

- If a day pupil shows symptoms during the school day, they will report to the isolation room in the Health Centre and their parents will be asked to come and collect them.
- If a boarding pupils shows symptoms, they will move to the isolation room in the house where they will be looked after by the Health Centre team and matrons. If they test positive and are unable to return home, they will be cared for in school until they are allowed to return to normal routines.



Remote learning

If a pupil is unable to attend school as a result of the pandemic, we will provide the following:

- A full programme of lessons delivered through a combination of joining in with live lessons and/or learning via a recording provided by the teacher and/or materials and assignments set in line with the normal curriculum delivery.
- Teachers will regularly check work and provide feedback to monitor understanding and adjust delivery.
- Pupils in Fourth, Remove and Fifth (9, 10 & 11) will have a minimum of a fortnightly one to one video call with their tutor and housemaster/housemistress.
- Pupils in the Sixth Form will have their normal one to one tutorial via a video call as well as meeting with each of their teachers once a fortnight.
- All pupils will receive the same level of marking and reporting as the pupils in school.
- Pupils will be able to communicate with all of their teachers via Teams, email or phone should they have any concerns.