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## DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION

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Dear Old Decanians,

Greetings from Dean Close, where we are geographically back together after operating at a distance since March. It is a great joy to hear the sounds of children playing, to see classrooms and boarding houses full of pupils, and to walk around the playing fields with the familiar activity of games lessons and outdoor activities taking place.

Of course, it is all far from normal still; our staff have worked tirelessly to make all the changes required to ensure that we are covid-safe and we are getting used to one-way systems, the use of additional hand-washing facilities and the wearing of face coverings in some areas of school. We cannot yet organise school fixtures, live performances are limited and school trips and tours are on hold. Let us hope that the virus will soon be sufficiently under control for these restrictions to be lifted, so that our pupils can enjoy all aspects of a Dean Close education to the full again.

Similar restrictions apply to gatherings of Old Decanians, of course, and although I have 'met' with a number of you via Zoom in recent months, I and my colleagues have missed the opportunities to engage more fully with alumni and to hear your stories and memories, as well as giving you an insight into the current health and activity of the Dean Close Foundation.

We are finding ways around this, and you will find with this letter copies both of *Flecker* in its bumper lockdown edition, packed with fascinating updates and information on the exploits of ODs, and of the *Foundation Annual Report*, which is published for the second year as a roundup of developments and activities in our schools and in the wider Foundation.

I say in my introduction to that report that I am deeply proud of all that has been achieved in the last year, and I want to reiterate that here; staff, pupils and parents have rallied together in a really heartening way and it has been great to see the reality of the Dean Close community both supporting one another and reaching out to our wider society in a variety of ways. I am pleased to say that pupil numbers are strong as we start the year, and that, although in common with other businesses we have experienced a financial impact from the pandemic, we are in good heart and in a strong position to look forward to an exciting future for our schools and nurseries.

Also included in the annual report is some feedback about the immeasurable difference that the Foundation Awards and Community Fund have made to recipients and how we plan to move forward with campus developments. On the latter front, the next phase is for the academic facilities in the heart of the school to be redeveloped, and we will keep you updated as this progresses. Once again, I would like to thank all those that have supported us and continue to support us so generously, it enables us to offer the very best to the children within the Dean Close Foundation.

Do please keep in touch, and if you have any comments, ideas or questions feel free to contact Alex or David Evans, our Director of External Relations, or come in for a socially distanced cup of coffee in Dean Close House.

Warmest wishes

Emma Taylor

