



Parent/Guardian Information

Academic Matters

March 2021

This information is intended to inform parents/guardians of our plans for remote learning, should the need arise.

What timetable will you follow?

We will revert to the same timetable we used during the Michaelmas term. Saturday school will return as an option for Year 6 pupils and compulsory for pupils in Years 7 and 8.

There is a lot of talk in the press about children needing to catch up. What are your views on this?

Across the country, some pupils have had limited access to education during Lockdown. This is not the case at DCPS. Teachers have worked tirelessly to provide meaningful learning opportunities and it has been lovely to see the progress made by so many of our pupils. The acquisition of certain knowledge and skills has kept pace with our expectations. We know that this is not the case in every situation: we fully expect things like handwriting and discussion skills to have slipped. Pupils need to be treated as individuals. Some will have flourished learning remotely; others will have struggled. As always, we will assess our pupils, identify their needs and then meet them where they are at.

What we will not do is put huge pressure on them to catch up, particularly in the remainder of this term. The British Psychological Society has warned of the dangers of doing so. Children are wonderfully resilient and we will help them plug any gaps in good time.

Sir Kevan Collins, the newly appointed Education Recovery Commissioner, has pointed out that children will need time for learning but also “to be together, play, to enjoy competitive sport, for music, for drama because these are critical areas which have been missed in their development.” We couldn’t agree more, and our usual rich and varied curriculum will give pupils the opportunities they have missed during Lockdown. Also, the two-session Friday Caring will replace the Friday Flourishing and will provide a space for pupils to get outside, discuss different issues, do quizzes, do some art and also to do some rehearsals for the play. We aim for this to be a relaxed but social and productive end to the main working week.

Will you continue to offer remote learning?

We know that a number of overseas pupils will not be able to return on March 8th as flights are not available or the need to quarantine would make returning impracticable. Whilst we obviously hope it will not happen, we must also prepare for asymptomatic pupils testing positive or pupils being identified as close contacts. In all these situations we will provide remote learning. A plan is being developed and will be published next week. We want to provide meaningful and motivating work for absent pupils but it must be manageable for teachers teaching live lessons in school.

We will not provide remote learning for pupils who are unwell - their focus must be on getting better. We also recognise that some parents may have concerns about their children returning to school and might prefer them to continue with remote learning. Whilst we empathise, the government has stressed that

school attendance is mandatory for all pupils from 8th March and so we will not provide remote learning in this situation either.

What about prep?

We are keen to get the balance between encouraging academic progress and social interaction which has been sorely lacking during Lockdown. Therefore, there will be no prep sessions for the remainder of this term. Instead, pupils will either be able to go home from 4.15pm or spend time socialising with other pupils in their year group bubble. (Boarders will either be able to return to their boarding house or mix with day pupils. We will then review the situation before the start of next term.

If you have any specific concerns or questions arising from this information sheet, please contact DCPS Academic Director, Mr J Gould (jgould@deanclose.org.uk)