

Dear Families,

It's that time of year again when we are excited to welcome back our wonderful children from the summer holidays. It has been lovely to see so many children in the Holiday club over the summer and all the exciting memories you have been making with the children. I know that all our staff are thrilled to start a new school year and are full of enthusiasm and cannot wait to get started.

I know for families this time of year can be full of questions and anxieties. I am hopeful that this letter will answer any questions you have and also ease any fears. However, if you have any questions, please just come and speak to a member of staff and we will try to answer it.

### **Return Date and Breakfast Club**

We return to school on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> of September**. Classroom doors open at 8:40am and we request children arrive at school slightly prior to this time. The school day finishes at 3:15pm.

For F1 and F2, children will be having a phased transition during the week beginning Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September to help children settle in and have the best start to school. Please see your transition week letter sent home before the summer for dates and times that your child will attend school during that week. F1 and F2 children will be in school for their full sessions from Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September.

Breakfast Club is open from Monday and will start at 8:00am. Mrs Fenton, Mrs Turner, Mrs Keyworth and Miss Farmer will run the club on a daily basis. It is free for FSM children and 50p each day for others and children can have a range of hot and cold breakfast options. All children can attend without an adult and will have access to a wide range of sporting, creative and game activities.

### **New Staff**

We are thrilled to announce that over the summer we have recruited a number of new teaching assistants to support across school. Miss Hawksworth will be joining EYFS, Miss Harper in Y1, Miss Smith in Y2, Miss Wales in Y3/4 and Miss Stocks-Hardy in Y5/6. We know that all our families and children will give them a warm East Dene welcome. Due to the staff joining over the summer, they will have a delayed start to school as we need to ensure we conduct all the safeguarding checks necessary before they begin.

We unfortunately have to announce that Mrs Fenton will be leaving us to work with the council as a locality family support worker. We know Mrs Fenton has supported so many families over the past 23 years and we wish her all the luck in the future. We know all families will want to say goodbye to Mrs Fenton before the 14<sup>th</sup> of September. We are currently in the process of appointing a successor to Mrs Fenton and will keep you updated once we are successful.

We would also like to inform you that Mrs Richardson left East Dene at the end of August. Mrs Richardson has worked at East Dene for over 20 years and has made an immeasurable impact on our pupils during this time. We wish her the best of luck in the future. Mrs Ahmed will continue in her role as SENDCo across the two schools. I am sure many of you have already met with Mrs Ahmed and if you have any concerns around your child, please speak to her and she will happily try to support.

### **Uniform**

At East Dene, we are thrilled that our children wear the school uniform with pride and come to school wearing it every day. I just want to remind all families that if your child isn't wearing school uniform, we do have some spares in school and we will request that your child wears that uniform for the day. This uniform is freshly washed and ensures that no child feels like they don't belong to our school. If you have any worries about uniform, please come and speak with a member of the leadership team. Below are our expectations for uniform.

*Our uniform comprises of a blue sweatshirt or cardigan, a white polo shirt and either black or grey trousers or a skirt or pinafore dress. For safety reasons we ask that children wear sensible shoes, not flip flops, crocs or shoes with a high heel. Please ensure that all items of clothing, including coats and shoes, are clearly labelled with your child's name.*

### **PE Uniform**

Since COVID, we have always asked children to attend school wearing their PE kit when it's their day to participate in PE. Throughout this time, we have been very flexible regarding the dress code. However, we now feel that on these days, we need to return to our PE kit uniform policy. As you all know, we always want to work with families and we really need your support in this area. Could you please ensure that your child wears the correct PE uniform on their PE days. The Uniform for PE is below:

*For PE activities we ask that children wear black shorts, a white t-shirt and plimsolls or trainers. For outdoor PE in colder weather, a black tracksuit bottoms and a black sweatshirt are required. No hoods are allowed on their PE kits for safety reasons.*

Once again, if a child fails to attend school in the correct PE uniform, we will use spare uniform in school to ensure children follow the uniform policy.

I have to be honest in that our CEO has noted on several visits that several pupils are not wearing school uniform. Therefore, we will be extra vigilant when it comes to uniform and any child not wearing the above uniform will be asked to change into the spare uniform. We will contact families prior to requesting pupils to change into our correct uniform.

**Jewellery** should not be worn to school, although we do allow stud earrings.

### **PE days are as follows:**

Tuesday – F1, F2 Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4

Thursday –Year 1, Year 5 and 6

### **Attendance**

As you all know, we value attendance highly at East Dene and we want to ensure that your child receives the best education possible. If a child's attendance is ever below 95%, it can impact on their progress and academic levels. As a result, we have so many rewards in school to promote positive attendance.

Over the past 12 months, we have seen a large number of families take holidays. These are always unauthorised. However, we have been working closely with the Rotherham Council's attendance leader and we have now been informed that we will continue to fine families for taking holidays within school time. This will be linked to certain criteria and Mrs Turner and Mrs Fenton will be writing to all families to inform them of this criteria. We will have to hold official meetings with families that want to have holidays during term time and if you fail to inform us of a holiday or don't fill in the correct paperwork, this could also result in a fine.

### **Term Dates**

I know that you are all keen to know when our holidays are this year. Below are the holidays for the academic year.

#### **END OF SUMMER HOLIDAY**

Back to school – Tuesday 5 September 2023

#### **AUTUMN HALF TERM**

Holiday starts - Thursday 19 October 2023

Back to school - Monday 30 October 2023

**CHRISTMAS**

Holiday starts - Friday 22 December 2023

Back to school – Monday 8 January 2024

**SPRING HALF TERM**

Holidays starts - Monday 12 February 2024

Back to school - Monday 19 February 2024

**EASTER**

Holiday starts – Friday 29 March 2024

Back to school - Monday 15 April 2024

**SUMMER HALF TERM**

Holiday starts - Monday 27 May 2024

Back to school - Monday 3 June 2024

**SUMMER HOLIDAY**

Holiday starts - Monday 22 July 2024

We do have several INSET days planned and the dates for these will be shared in the upcoming days. We will continue to send reminders via text message and on social media around the holidays.

**Communication.**

The family questionnaire that we conducted in the summer term was extremely positive and we appreciate all the positive comments you made regarding school. One area we always try to improve upon is communication. As you may know, we have had to change the dinner payment system we use (the old one has gone out of business). We will now be using an app called School Gateway, which should make communication & paying for lunches far more accessible. Please see the letter Miss Green sent prior to the Summer about the new app. (this can be found on the website under the letters for parent's page). We will be using the welcome meetings to help support families to gain access to the app.

**Welcome Meetings**

Over the next few weeks, your child's class teacher will invite you to a welcome meeting that takes place after school. These meetings are vital as they will cover their expectations, homework and other aspects of your child's curriculum. Text messages will be sent to families regarding these meetings during the first week back.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued support over the past year. We are dedicated to continue to improve the quality of education at East Dene and make the school a beacon of excellence. We are also excited to continue to develop links with all our families to make our school the best place to learn and thrive. We know that children get the very best education in school but also the support you give your children at home is vital. It just proves that together, we can achieve excellence every day. We are excited about the challenges we will face this year and we know that we will face these challenges together.

Thank you for all your support and for always going the extra mile for our children and school. Let's have a great 2023/24.

Thanks



Mr Tankard and all the staff at East Dene.