

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 we cannot wait to hear about 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 2nd of September**. Classroom doors open at 8:40am and we request children arrive at school as close to this time as they can. The school day finishes at 3:15pm.

For F1 and F2, children – we will be running our usual times, F1 entrance will be open from 8:25am and close at 8.30am, F2 will be open from 8.40am – 8.50am each morning.

Breakfast Club is open from Tuesday and will start at 8:00am. Mrs Turner, Mrs Keyworth and Miss Farmer will run the club on a daily basis. Please enter breakfast club at the main reception. It is free for all children and they 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. Please arrive before 8.30am. If you arrive after 8.30am you need to use the normal entrance.

New Staff

We are thrilled to announce that we have a new teacher starting in year 5, Miss Everest, also over the summer we have recruited a number of new teaching assistants to support across school. Miss Hussain and Miss Taher will be joining the Y2 Team. We know that all our families and children will give them all a warm East Dene welcome. Due to the TA's 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.

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 black 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 asked children to attend school wearing their PE kit when it's their day to participate in PE, **we are now happy for children to bring their PE kit to school in their bag and get changed in school.** We are glad that families last year followed the PE 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 brings 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 – F2, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6

Thursday –F1, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5

Healthy Snacks/Nut-free School

As a healthy and nut-free school, we ask that any snacks brought in for breaktimes are healthy options such as fruit or other nutritious snacks. Please do not send your child with fizzy or energy drinks, water is the best option for keeping them hydrated throughout the day. We also kindly request that no nuts or chocolate nut spread are included in packed lunches or snacks, as we have several pupils and staff with nut allergies.

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 year, we have seen a significant increase in families taking holidays during term time. As you may be aware, the Department for Education introduced a new policy in August 2024. Under this policy:

Holiday fines have increased.

Families could face prosecution if they take three holidays within a three-year period, subject to specific criteria.

If you would like more information about these criteria, please speak to Miss Wild, Mr Tankard, or Mrs Middleton.

Our Trust is committed to treating all families consistently across our schools. Therefore, if a family meets the criteria, we will issue a fine in line with the policy.

If you are planning a holiday, please complete the usual holiday request form. This is essential so we can meet safeguarding requirements and know where our children are at all times.

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 2 September 2025

AUTUMN HALF TERM

Last Day at School – Friday 17 October 2025

Back to school - Monday 3 November 2025

CHRISTMAS

Last Day at School - Friday 19 December 2025

Back to school – Monday 5 January 2026

SPRING HALF TERM

Last Day at School – Friday 13 February 2026

Back to school – Tuesday 24 February 2026

EASTER

Last Day at School – Friday 27 March 2026

Back to school - Monday 13 April 2026

SUMMER HALF TERM

Last Day at School - Friday 22 May 2026

Back to school – Monday 1 June 2026

SUMMER HOLIDAY

Last Day at School – Wednesday 22 July 2026

The school calendar is also available on our website www.eastdene.org

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.

Parent Feedback

We always want to listen to our families and work in partnership with you. In our recent family questionnaire, some of you shared that the end-of-day collection process was causing stress. We have listened to your feedback and are making some changes to help.

From Tuesday:

- A one-way system will be in place at the end of the day.
- Families can queue in the car park from 3:00pm.
- At 3:15pm, we will open the playground gates.
- Families can collect their child/ren and then exit via the main drive.

This one-way system is something many of you have requested, and we hope it makes collection smoother and less stressful for everyone.

Morning drop-off:

- Procedures will remain the same, with entry via the main drive only.

Upcoming improvements:

Over the next few months, there will be some work on site which may temporarily affect these plans:

- A full playground redevelopment (£150,000 investment) to make the area more engaging and remove raised areas for improved safety.
- Installation of automated gates at both the pedestrian and car park entrances.

We will keep you informed as soon as we have confirmed start dates for this work.

We hope these changes show how committed we are to listening to you and working together to create the very best environment for our children.

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. App messages will be sent to families regarding these meetings during the first week back, please make sure you have registered for the Arbor App so you don't miss any important messages.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued support over the past few years. 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 2025/26

Thanks



Mr Tankard and all the staff at East Dene.