

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 all about 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 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

Y1-Y6 children return to school on Wednesday 2nd of September. Classroom doors open at 8:40am and we request children arrive at school on time. The school day finishes at 3:15pm.

For N2 and Reception (F1 & F2), children will be having a phased transition during the week beginning Wednesday 2nd 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. If you have misplaced your letter, please contact Miss Horsefall or Mrs Steel on Class Dojo.

Breakfast Club is open from Wednesday and will start at 8:00am. Mrs Farmer, Mrs Keyworth, Mrs Turner and Mrs Johnson will run the club daily. It is free and children can have a range of hot and cold breakfast options. Children attending Breakfast Club should be dropped off at Main Reception any time between 8am – 8.20am. From there, they will be able to walk to Breakfast Club, settle in and enjoy spending time with their friends before the school day begins.

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 is not wearing school uniform, we do have spare uniform 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 do not belong to our school.

If you have any worries about uniform, please come and speak with a member of the leadership team. We also have a pre-loved uniform stand next to the main reception office. If you would like any items from this stand, please come and help yourself.

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 have always asked children to attend school wearing their PE kit when it is their day to participate in PE. As you all know, we always want to work with families, and we really need your support to ensure your child follows the PE uniform policy on the days they have

PE. 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:

- A plain white t-shirt – No football shirts
- Black joggers, shorts, or leggings
- Suitable sports trainers
- A school jumper (please note, hoodies are not permitted)

In an effort to support families financially and to maintain a uniform appearance, branded items, including football shirts, will not be permitted. This decision is aimed at ensuring that all children feel included and equal, without the pressure of wearing expensive or branded clothing.

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.

PE days are as follows:

- Tuesday – EYFS, Y1, Y2.
- Wednesday – Year 3 and Year 4
- Friday – Year 5 and Year 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 two years, 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, Mr Knowles 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 – Wednesday 2 September 2026

AUTUMN HALF TERM

Last day at school – Friday 16th October 2026

Back to school - Monday 2nd November 2026

CHRISTMAS

Last day at school - Friday 18th December 2026

Back to school – Monday 4th January 2027

SPRING HALF TERM

Last day at school – Friday 12th February 2027

Back to school – Tuesday 23rd February 2027

EASTER

Last day at school – Thursday 25th March 2027

Back to school - Monday 12th April 2027

SUMMER HALF TERM

Last day at school - Friday 28th May 2027

Back to school – Monday 7th June 2027

SUMMER HOLIDAY

Last day at school – Friday 23rd July 2027

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 the app message and on social media around the holidays.

Updates

Following our Family Forum and Summer Questionnaire, we have been looking closely at the areas you asked us to work on.

Improved Site Security

Over the summer, we have made significant improvements to the security of our school site by installing new automated entrance gates. From September, access for both vehicles and pedestrians will be controlled through an intercom system.

The gates will be locked from 9am until 3:00pm, and visitors will need to use the intercom to request entry. Our F1 families arriving at 11:30am will have access until 11:40am then the gate will be locked.

End-of-day collection arrangements will remain unchanged, as the gates will be open from 3:00pm to allow families to enter the car park as normal. As we introduce this new system, we kindly ask for your patience and understanding while everyone becomes familiar with the arrangements. We are always keen to hear from our families and would welcome any feedback that helps us improve the experience for everyone.

New Bike and Scooter Storage Area

We have also introduced a new storage area for bicycles and scooters, which is located alongside the car park. Pupils bringing a bike or scooter to school should take it onto the yard, where staff will show them exactly where it should be stored. We hope this new arrangement will provide a safer and more organised space for pupils who choose to travel to school in this way.

Welcome Meetings

Over the next few weeks, your child's class teacher will invite you to a welcome meeting that will take 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.

Arbor

Please make sure you can always access Arbor as we will send any information and exciting things happening in school through this app. Trips and dinners will need to be paid through the app as we can no longer accept cash. See the office ladies if you have any problems with Arbor.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued support over the past 4 years. Last Year, school received the best set of academic data since 2017. We know that, as a school community, we continue to go from strength to strength. Our children benefit from an excellent education in school, supported by the unwavering commitment of their families at home. This powerful partnership is at the heart of everything we do and demonstrates that, when we work together, we can achieve excellence every day.

We are excited about the opportunities and challenges that the year ahead will bring. Whatever lies ahead, we are confident that by working together, supporting one another and maintaining our shared high expectations, we will continue to help every child thrive and succeed.

Thank you for all your support and for always going the extra mile for our children and school. Let's have a great 2026/27

Many thanks



Mr Tankard and all the staff at East Dene.