



22nd October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a strange – and long – half term it has been! As always, the children have amazed us with their resilience, and largely have got back into the routines and habits of learning that we expect of them all. They are certainly ready for a rest though, just in time for half term! I have a few things to share with you as we break up.

Remote Learning

You may be aware that schools are expected by the government to have established their remote education plan and set up by now. As you know, we had to ensure this was in place much quicker due to such an early bubble closure. Fortunately, this has meant that we have been able to spend time reviewing and evaluating the plans so that our offer can be clear, easy to access and comprehensive in terms of continued, quality education at the point that any children need to remain at home. You can find the plan on our website here: https://dowson-primary-academy.schudio.com/files/documents/Remote_Education_Policy.pdf . It sets out what to expect in the event of different scenarios that might require children to learn from home.

I must point out that in any event that children are required to learn from home, engagement with the online offer is critical to their continued progress and will ensure they can make a seamless transition back into school at the end of the period of isolation. This engagement is counted as 'attendance' and we have a duty of care to ensure contact with the children via this means for safeguarding purposes during the time we are not having face to face contact. That said, we recognise that there are a range of difficulties families may face with this and ask that you work with us to support you in resolving these so that our pupils get their entitlement to education whilst not in school.

COVID-19

I am sure you can imagine that keeping abreast of the attendance of pupils during this time is particularly difficult when managing different lengths of isolation periods and which families are awaiting test results etc. We are also answering lots of queries about the scenarios in which pupils might be required to isolate. I thought it may be helpful to share again the advice sheet for parents from the authority on what to do in different situations that may arise and when a return to school is possible. This is official advice and should be used to inform your decision making for your family during these times.

In all cases, we ask that you please keep school informed so that we can maintain our records of attendance accurately and offer support where necessary and practicable.

During the holidays, it is still important that you communicate any situations to us that will affect your child's attendance; this communication is vital where a pupil tests positive as we will need to take any necessary actions that may impact other pupils or staff in school and communicate this with as much notice for our families as we can.

You should contact us over the holidays through the messenger service on our main Facebook Page or via the admin email address at admin@dowson.tameside.sch.uk FAO Mrs Thornburn. Please do not send messages through Class Dojo for this purpose as teachers are not expected to monitor this during their holidays.





Parking

I have been made aware of a few incidents of discourteous parking around school again, a couple in which pupils have nearly been injured. I was disappointed to be informed of the nature of exchanges between parents that ensued in these cases and would ask again that we are polite and respectful to each other as good role models to our children. I always say that it is one of my biggest fears that there will be a serious accident that devastates our school community; please don't let that happen by driving and parking in a safe way.

Open Days

Sadly, we will not be able to hold our usual open days for prospective parents this year. Instead, we will be creating a virtual open day for anyone that would like to view school who may be thinking of applying for September 2021. This will be shared via our social media and website when it is ready. Please share this information with anyone you know will be interested and look out for the launch.

Similarly, we will not be able to hold our November Parent Consultation Day in the usual way. We do however, want to share the information about how well your child has settled and is getting on since returning so will be sending a paper report and offering or requesting a telephone / video conference to discuss this. I will communicate more information around how this will work when we return.

YEAR 6 Parents, don't forget applications for High School need to be in by 31st October which is during the holidays.

Great Citizens

Our virtual assembly this morning was a delight to say the least and made me incredibly proud. Each teacher announced and awarded our Great Citizen award to someone in their class who demonstrates all the values and traits we would expect to see for this. As always, it was a hard decision because we have so many to choose from but look out on Class Dojo to see who your class winner was!

That just leaves me to say a big thank you to you all for your cooperation with all of the new systems around school that we are getting used to and are set to be in place for some time to come. Thank you also for your support, care and understanding during these times – we can continue to get through this together and protect the most vulnerable in our community if we continue to follow the rules and stay safe.

Have a lovely half term if you can – let's hope it stays dry so the outdoor things we are allowed to do can go ahead and we can still have fun with our families. If not, waterproofs and wellies will help or ideas for indoor fun like baking and board games are always a hit too. The Dowson Family page is the place to share and get great ideas if you need any!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kathryn Thornburn
Principal

