



The Federation of The Downs & Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools



Chair of Governors: Dr A Eyden

Vice Chair of Governors: Rev D Ridley

"if you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible."

(Matthew: 17 v20)

The Downs CEP School

Owen Square, Walmer

Kent CT14 7TL

Tel: 01304 372486 Fax: 01304 380471

Website: www.downs.kent.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Miss T Leighton

Deputy Head: Ms N Luxford

SENCO: Mrs N Barnes

Safeguarding Lead: Mr M Turner

Northbourne CEP School

Northbourne, Deal

Kent CT14 0LP

Tel: 01304 611376 Fax: 01304 621938

Website: www.northbourne-cep.kent.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mr M Reynolds

SENCO: Mrs K Morrison

Safeguarding Lead: Mr M Turner

End of Term – Christmas Holidays – COVID

Dear parents and carers

I am sure that many of you will have seen the news that the Department of Education (DfE) have told schools that they are now able to move a School Development (inset) day to the end of term to allow schools to close for pupils earlier than scheduled. This would mean term ending on Thursday 17th December instead of the originally planned Friday 18th December. This is a tremendously difficult decision to make. We have consulted with our all our local primary schools to ensure we are working together to support our community.

Currently, we are planning to remain open up to and including Friday 18th December as previously planned. This decision has been made for three reasons:

- We do not have any training days available to exchange for next Friday
- We feel as though our community would be negatively impacted by such a late change and will struggle to arrange adequate childcare with such short notice
- Closing a day early would do little to reduce anxieties around COVID 19 and potential isolation during the Christmas break

However, if anything changes in our local area over the next few days we may have to revisit this decision.

We understand that our families are experiencing increased anxiety with the levels of COVID infection rates being so high in Kent and being in tier 3, however the government is resolute about schools remaining open. A number of families have contacted the school to inform us that they will be keeping their children at home next week due to this anxiety. We are not able to authorise this absence and encourage all children to attend school whenever possible; we do empathise with its sentiment and acknowledge its rationale. Families have been put in a difficult position this Christmas and it is difficult to deny anyone an opportunity to ensure their families safety and wellbeing at this time of year.

The reality is if your child's bubble is closed during the last week of term (14th – 18th December) you will, legally, have to isolate your child at home for 2 weeks- this will include Christmas Day. This means that your child would not be allowed to leave the house during this time and you would not be allowed visitors to your home. The relaxed Christmas rules would not change this.

If your child becomes unwell between Friday 18th December and Monday 21st December and has a positive test result, we will need you to contact us immediately on 07756807060. This number will be available between 10.00am and 4.00pm from Saturday 19th December until Thursday 24th December. If you need to leave a message, include your name, your child's name and a contact number to call you back on. Should there be a positive test between these dates, we will inform all parents and staff within that class/year group bubble and inform them of the isolation period, following consultation with the DfE and Public Health England (PHE): This isolation period may encompass Christmas Day. This phone number is strictly to report positive Covid cases.



Reminders for drop off and pick up:

We wish for everyone to be safe and to be able to experience their family Christmas as planned. As such we ask that you are extra vigilant in these last few days and ensure that

- You are social distancing between other parents and staff, respecting the 2m rule
- You are wearing a face covering on our school site
- Children arrive at their allocated time – we have seen an increasing number of children arriving with other year groups (that we are keeping apart in school) or having to come to the office, which is creating non-essential contact with office staff
- All communication with school is via text, email, phone or communicated to staff on gate duty – the office is closed to all visitors except in an emergency
- The number of adults dropping off/collecting children is limited to one person

The main symptoms of Coronavirus remain the same

- **High temperature**
- **A new continuous cough**
- **Loss/Change to your sense of smell or taste**

However, we are aware of a number of positive cases where children and adults have experienced none of these symptoms but had some of those below instead

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea

If your child is displaying **any** of the above symptoms, please keep them at home as a precaution in the lead up to the end of term.

On the last day of term (Friday 18th December) we will be finishing earlier, by staggered times and using the same gates as normal, as indicated in previous newsletters:

Reception	1.15pm
Years 5 and 6	1.20pm
Years 3 and 4	1.30pm
Years 1 and 2	1.40pm

This has been an extremely difficult year for us all, we have all had to make huge changes to our daily routines and had to make numerous personal sacrifices. We have all worked hard as a community to stay connected and safe throughout. Hopefully, we can all look to 2021 with new hope and optimism as the vaccine is beginning to be distributed across the country. I hope this allows us to eventually move back to a more 'normal' way of life.

Thank you again for all your support and kind messages that have kept us all going during this unprecedented year. I would also like to thank my amazing team for their continued hard work, resilience and enthusiasm to ensure that the school has remained open throughout. I have been humbled on a daily basis by their dedication to your children's wellbeing and education. We hope that you all have a safe holiday and we look forward to welcoming the children back on Monday 4th January 2021.

Your sincerely
Miss T Leighton
Headteacher

