



SJB/JRu
16 July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Well, that was certainly a different year! None of us could have predicted that we would be approaching summer having had such a large period of time not being in school and accessing our learning or teaching online.

I was going to write down all of the things that we have not been able to do because of Coronavirus, but actually, I felt it best to reflect on the things we have done. Over these months in lockdown, the air was cleaner, we reduced pollution levels, kept in touch with family members more than we had before, albeit remotely, and started to understand what we had been taking for granted.

As teachers, we had the chance to learn new ways of teaching, we carried on our learning and we stayed together as a team. Above all, we realised that we missed being in school and that buzz that the daily life brings to a school community.

Throughout lockdown, we have tried to maintain the quality of teaching provision and as you know, we shifted to more 'live' lessons, but also responded to your feedback about how difficult it was managing the full timetable we started with. Hopefully, that little bit of breathing room helped you as much as it did us and I would love to hear that the Wednesday afternoons helped you all in keeping the house in good order with all of the family in it!

I do have to say a huge thank you to the staff at Dene Magna, who, whatever their role is, have come together so that we can make the very best of the strange times we found ourselves in. It says a lot about a school community when everyone offers their time to help out in any way they can and it makes me so proud to be the headteacher of this great school.

This final letter of the year is also a chance to say goodbye to the staff who begin new journeys from September. Mrs Rayfield joined us in 2004 and has been a much-loved teacher of Science, Head of Science and Assistant Headteacher. We wish her all the best as she takes up a deputy headship in Gloucester. Mrs Goodwin, who has been so instrumental in shaping the reading of so many people in our community, retires as our librarian this year. We also say goodbye to Mr Thorpe-Williams, Miss Brain and Miss Rawlings. Miss Brain will be starting her teacher training and we wish her all the best with that.

We welcome Miss Lee, teacher of RS and Sociology, Mr Hacker, teacher of MFL, Mr Morgan, Head of Geography and Mr Watts, teacher of Maths. We look forward to working with them next year.

We would also like to congratulate Mrs Stevenson, who in addition to teaching Geography will also become our Assistant SENCO, Mr Griffiths who has become our Director of PE across the Trust, Mrs Ray who has become Director of Finance across the Trust, Mrs Dixon-Gough who has become Director of SEN across the Trust, Mr Derrick who has taken on a secondment to Assistant Headteacher (Teaching and Learning), Mrs Clark who has become Head of Science while Mr Derrick is Assistant Headteacher and last but not least Miss Malsom who has become a teacher of Maths.

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I would love to tell you that September will be back to normal, but we all know that it will not be. Our job will be to make it as normal as it can be and today we published our student and parent guide to what September will be like. There will be some changes and perhaps the biggest will be that students will be kept in year group zones. In a slight change, the teachers will be moving to the students and we will be providing additional buses that will leave Dene Magna at 4.30 pm. This will allow all of our Y11 students to have a 6th lesson (this will be compulsory) and it will also enable us to look at running a number of the clubs that normally take place in the school day. Students will also have access to practical lessons and outside safe zones for fresh air and break times.

When you read the guidance, please bear in mind that we will be publishing further details at the end of August as we know there are many more layers of questions that people might have. The idea of this version of the guide is to reassure you that we have a plan and that your daughter/son will be cared for and we will be setting our days up to keep them safe and learning. Please read through it and discuss it at length with your daughter/son. There are things in there that are 'non-negotiables' and so having an understanding of this before September will keep us all safe! Hopefully, you will bear with us and trust us to deliver in the way we have delivered so far. If you do have any questions then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

This week we have hosted parents/carers and students for our pastoral discussions. It has been lovely to see so many of you and to be able to connect with you once again. Our students have been a credit to you as they have worked so hard throughout lockdown and also stepped up in their family/community roles to ensure that vulnerable members of our community have been safe. Stories of students doing shopping for neighbours, cleaning, dog walking and even helping with food parcel drops just show us the spirit that we have at Dene Magna. Staff have really enjoyed seeing you again and we are all buzzing for September. We are passionate that the students at Dene Magna do not fall into this 'lost generation' and we have shared bridging units for students to complete during the summer break. They are available on the website and paper copies are in school.

My last thank you goes to you. As parents/carers you have supported our online learning and in many cases, juggled your own jobs and childcare. Many of you are key workers and your heroic efforts have astounded all of us. You will forever have our thanks for what you do.

Have the most wonderful summer. You may be going away or you may continue to enjoy your local area. Please stay safe. If your daughter/son is out and about, please remind them that they are representing your family and our community. They can continue to do 'classy acts' to help people and they are old enough to know what a safe choice is.

Thank you for your continued support of what we do at Dene Magna. It's been a strange year, but it has once again been an honour to work alongside you all.

Stay safe and see you in September.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Brady', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephen Brady
Headteacher