Denby Free News

Summer Term 1 2026.

It's the summer term!

Hi everyone,
Welcome back! I hope you all had a wonderful Easter break and managed to enjoy some of the spring sunshine. It is hard to believe we are already entering the final term of the school year, but it is easily one of my favorite times to be at school.

The Summer Term is always a 'bumper' season for us, packed with the events that make school memories last a lifetime. We have a huge amount to look forward to, including:
Our Upper KS2 children are preparing for their big adventures on residential!
Sports Day. I'm already looking forward to seeing everyone out on the field, showing great sportsmanship and team spirit.
As we look toward September, we'll be supporting the children as they spend time in their new classes, ensuring they feel confident and excited for the step up.
We'll be rounding off the year by reflecting on everything the children have achieved.

While there is plenty of fun to be had, we are also focused on finishing the curriculum strongly. Your continued support with home reading and keeping those TTRockstars skills sharp is as important now as it was in January.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership—let's make this final term a truly memorable one for the children!
The kindest regards,
Mrs Clarke

Safeguarding at Denby Free

If you are concerned for a child's welfare, please speak to any of our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) Mrs Clarke, Mrs Johnson or Miss Hunt. Our Safeguarding Governor is Lyndsay Reast. Please contact the School Office if you wish to speak to any of these members of staff.

Safeguarding Corner: Summer Safety & Digital Wellbeing
As the days get longer and the sun finally makes an appearance, our focus shifts to helping the children enjoy their increased independence safely —both outside and online.

1. The Big Summer Consultation
You may have seen in the news that the UK Government is currently consulting on new measures to "give childhood back" to kids. This includes potential national rules on social media bans for under-16s and night-time app curfews.

The "Summer Shift": With school routines relaxing soon, it's easy for screen time to skyrocket. This is a great time to trial your own "Home Charter"—perhaps agreeing on no-phone zones during family meals or outdoor play to keep that healthy balance before the holidays hit.

2. Water Safety: Stop and Think
With trips to the coast or even just paddling pools in the garden, water safety is paramount. We teach the children the RNLI "Float to Live" technique in school, but please remind them:

Cold Water Shock: Even on a hot day, UK open water (lakes, rivers, and the sea) remains dangerously cold and can cause even strong swimmers to struggle.

Supervision: Always ensure an adult is designated as the "Water Watcher" during gatherings—it only takes a second for a child to get into difficulty quietly.

3. Independence & "The Route Home"
As Year 6 prepare for their transition to secondary school, many are starting to walk home alone.
The "Phone Down" Rule: If your child has got or is getting a mobile phone, please talk to them about 'distracted walking.' Talk to your children that if they are walking alone, phones should stay in bags. Being aware of traffic and surroundings is far more important than a streak or a notification!

Top Resource for Parents:
The NSPCC's updated 2026 Guide to Summer Safety is now live. It covers everything from setting boundaries for "out of door" play to managing new "AI Friend" features on popular apps. Visit the NSPCC Online Safety Hub here.

Notices and news

Homework Without the Hardship!

As the evenings get lighter and the sun starts shining, we know that sitting down to do homework is often the last thing children (and parents!) want to do. However, keeping those habits going through the Summer Term is vital for a smooth transition into the next school year.

Here are three tips to keep the peace and get the work done:

- The "Beat the Clock" Challenge: Instead of an open-ended session that feels like it will last forever, set a timer for a short, sharp burst (e.g., 15 minutes). Tell them: "When the timer pings, we stop." Most children find it much easier to focus when they can see the finish line on the clock.
- The First/Then Rule: Use the power of the summer evenings as a positive bribe! "First, we do 10 minutes on TTRockstars, then we go to the park/have an ice lolly/play in the garden." Keeping the reward immediate and outdoor-focused works wonders at this time of year.
- Change the Scenery: Who says homework has to happen at the kitchen table? If it's a reading task or a spelling review, grab a picnic blanket and do it outside. Sometimes just removing the "formal" desk environment lowers the pressure and prevents the brain fog.

Friends of Denby Free

the Friends can't keep fundraising without volunteers, so if you'd like to help all you need to do is leave your details with the school office to pass them on to one of the Friends who will contact you.

Our Amazing "Friends of Denby"

Thank you, yet again, to our Friends of Denby who have been putting on events like the Valentine's Disco and the Easter Trail. Both were, for absolutely different reasons, fantastic. We love the events where families can just be together. It's completely what our vision is for our school. Somewhere where we can be a community, so thank you Friends for facilitating these moments.

For the next academic year, the Friends will be raising funds to get Forest Schools really powering forward and enabling every child to experience our school grounds in different seasons in ways that are new and exciting to them.

Save the Date: Don't forget! The always AWESOME Summer Fair will be held on Friday 3rd July.
We always need volunteers to help pack things up after the event. If you can help, please let us know.

Our Denby Free Governors

As we enter the final term of the year, the Governing Body is shifting its focus toward impact and reflection. Following our work in the spring on curriculum updates and 'Ofsted readiness,' we are now seeing those plans bear fruit across the school.

While the children are looking forward to their summer activities, our Governors are looking toward September.
Our current focus includes:

- Budget & Resources: Finalising the financial plan for the next academic year to ensure we continue to provide high-quality staffing and the best possible learning tools for every classroom.
- The Transition Experience: Monitoring how the school supports our Year 6 leavers and our new Reception intake, ensuring every child feels secure and excited about their next step.
- Site Enhancements: Reviewing our premises plan to ensure the school environment remains a safe, inspiring, and sustainable place for our community to grow.

Looking Ahead

We are also looking forward to being a visible presence at the upcoming Sports Days and Celebration Events. These occasions are a wonderful opportunity for us to hear from you directly. Your feedback remains a vital part of our decision-making process, helping us ensure that our school continues to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support of the school leadership team and the whole staff community.

Every minute counts! Attendance and punctuality

Why Attendance Matters

We all love a holiday, but as we enter the Summer Term, we want to share why we ask families to keep trips to the official school breaks. The final term is a "golden period" for learning, and even a few days away can have a bigger impact than you might think.

1. The Social Glue
Friendships evolve quickly in primary school. Missing a week means missing out on the shared jokes, playground games, and "you had to be there" moments that form the social glue of the classroom. Coming back after a break can sometimes feel like going to the cinema half way through the film.

2. The Learning Ladder
Our curriculum is built like a ladder—each lesson is a vital rung. If a child misses the intro to a new concept in Maths or English, the subsequent lessons can feel confusing. It's not just about the work missed; it's about the confidence lost when trying to catch up.

3. Momentum
Summer Term is when months of hard work finally 'click' for many children. Constant attendance helps maintain that momentum. Interrupting this flow can stall progress just as they are about to fly through their targets.

Did you know? A two-week holiday during term time means your child misses 50 hours of planned learning and social interaction.

Thank you for helping us keep your child's learning on track by planning your adventures for the school holidays!

What's coming up / just to let you know...

Year 5 and Year 6 residential visits top tips

Preparing for a residential trip is a huge milestone for children (and a bit of a nerve-wracker for parents!). The goal is to build confidence and independence so the children can focus on the fun!

1. Avoid the temptation to pack the bag for them! Sit down and pack with them so they know what's theirs and where it is.
2. Residential bedrooms can quickly become a 'floordrobe.' Pop a full day's outfit (t-shirt, underwear, socks) into a single bundle or put them into individual labelled bags.
3. Practice the Tricky Stuff. In the week leading up, have them practice stripping a duvet cover, or organising their own toiletries bag.
5. Label Everything (Yes, even that) Use a permanent marker on labels. Don't just label the big stuff; label the inside of shoes, the toothpaste tube, and even their torch.
6. The Positive Send-off. Your child will mirror your energy. Even if you're feeling anxious, keep the conversation focused on the adventures they'll be with.

Sports Day

We are so excited to invite you to join us for our annual Sports Day! This is always a highlight of the school calendar—a day defined by teamwork, resilience, and a lot of cheers.

We would love for you to come along and support the children as they compete, and for the particularly brave among you, there will be the traditional Parent Race to join in with! We are looking forward to seeing you all there for a fantastic afternoon of fun in the sun on 9th July.

Celebrating the arts

We have lots of opportunities to engage with the arts coming up. Celebrating the arts is about far more than just paint and performance; it is vital for cognitive and emotional growth. By engaging in creative events, children develop critical thinking and fine motor skills while learning to navigate complex emotions through self-expression. These experiences teach our children that there are many ways to solve a problem and that their unique perspective has value. We cannot wait for our children to connect with the world around them in meaningful, imaginative ways through these enrichment activities.

Tough Runner

Tough Runner will take place on FRIDAY 22nd MAY. As in previous years, all children will have the opportunity to have a go throughout the day, and parents will then be invited to join us in the afternoon (timings to be confirmed)

The Friends of Denby Free have very kindly offered to make a large donation towards this and we are also asking for parents to donate £2 per child. Payment can be made on Parent Pay in the usual way and, whilst it is voluntary, without your support the event will not be able to take place.

There will be a BBQ, stalls and even a chance to soak a teacher!

SATs Week

SATs week for our Year 6 children will be during the week beginning 11th May.
Whilst we know that you cannot measure the awesomeness of the children by the result of a test on one day in their primary school career, we do want them to feel settled and happy. Miss Hunt and Mrs Marshall will be running their legendary SATs Breakfast Club and we encourage everyone in Year 6 to come along, even if they don't have anything to eat. It's all about being together as Team Eagles before the tests.

Denby Free Book Week. 8th - 12th June

We have our Denby Free book week coming up!
This all ties in nicely with the National Year of Reading and this year we will be focusing on reading for pleasure, which is exactly what we are trying to promote through our new way of banding our reading books for our KS2 children.
Research shows that reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success, so we've planned a week of afternoon activities to spark that magic.

What's Happening?

- Monday: The Blind Date Book Swap. Please send your child in with a book they have finished and are happy to part with. We will wrap them in school to create a "mystery" gift for another classmate!
- Tuesday: Paws & Pages. Children are invited to bring in a small plush toy/teddy to "read to" during our cozy afternoon session.
- Wednesday: Stop, Drop, and Read. You might hear about this at home! At various points, the whole school will freeze to read for 10 minutes—wherever they are!
- Thursday: The Sounds of Stories. We'll be using AI music tools to create "theme tunes" for our favourite book characters.
- Friday's Finale: We will come to school dressed as who we would like to be if we were in a story. You can go as big as you like, or keep things casual!

Performances, services and celebrations

During the Summer Term there are lots of different opportunities to come and see your child in action or to celebrate heir wonderful achievements.

There can be a lot of dates to remember. We'll try to keep the calendar updated as much as possible. On Class Dojo, if you click on an event in the calendar, there will be information and timings that you need to know.

Anything that we will be doing as an inidividual class, class teacher's will post. Anything that only imcludes a small amount of individual children, we will send direct messages to you. Hopefully, this will ensure that you know exactly what is happening when!

Denby Dates! (Summer term 1 newsletter)

MAY

11 - 14th - SATs Week
13th - Valley Cids in school for Collective Worship
14th & 15th - Year 5 at Lea Green
18th & 19th - Year 6 at Mount Cook
18th - Owls and Falcons off to Cromford Mill
19th - Ambassador afternoon tea
21st - Doves Class Art Gallery
22nd - Tough Runner
22nd - Break up for half term



JUNE

1st - Back to school!
5th - Discover Opera Workshop
8th - Denby Book Week (more details to follow closer to the time)
9th for a week - Book Fair
16th - Class photos
19th & 22nd - INSET days (your term time long weekend)
25th - JFCS Booksparks (for chosen Y6 children)
24th - Denby Free Music Appreciation Day

JULY

1st - Villey Cids in school for Collective Worship
3rd - Summer Fair
9th - Sports Day
13th - Falcons drumming concert for parents
14th - Guitar performance (to show learning in music lessons)
14th - Ambassador afternoon tea
16th - Reserve Sports Day
16th - Everybody Sing workshop
20th - End of year awards celebration
21st - Denby's Got Talent
22nd - Year 6 Leavers Service
23rd - Year 6 festival
23rd - Break up for summer!

KEY DATES FOR NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR:

INSET days for 2026 / 2027
Friday 4th September 2026 (matches with JFCS)
Monday 4th January
Monday 22nd February 2027
Monday 21st June 2027 (matches with JFCS)
Monday 26th July 2027 (matches with JFCS)

Children return to school on Monday 7th September 2026

Bank Holidays
Friday 26th March 2027
Monday 3rd May 2027

