



Ref: SJB/Plo
12 September 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

I want to start this year off by hoping that you all had a restful summer. Time has certainly flown by, but it is great being back in school and welcoming our new students and staff to our community. Obviously last week ended with the terribly sad news regarding Queen Elizabeth II. We have been using assembly time to discuss this with our students. As a mark of respect, we will be closed on 19th September so that we, like the rest of the country, can pay our respects.

Our new students have settled in very well and this week we add the next layer of the school experience with clubs and homework (ILT). We will share the ILT timetables with you tomorrow so that you can see when your child has learning to do at home.

The students are looking superb and I love this time of year as you see our Y7 students wrestling with how to put a tie on straight. They will get there! It is lovely seeing all of the new students settling in and making friends. Remember that it is entirely natural that those friendship groups will evolve over time and we will work with the students to understand this process of growing up. If you visit the school website you will be able to see all of the subjects your child is studying this year. You will also see when they cover certain topics and why. It is a feature of all our lessons that we talk about why we are learning these things, so please do ask when they get home.

I wanted to share our key priorities with you for the coming year so that you can be certain what we are looking at and why. As we approach a 'normal' year we are refining a few key areas and they are:

1. Attendance. We thank you for your support in ensuring excellent attendance and we will be contacting parents if any student has a dip in their attendance. The reason for this is that, put simply, if you are not in school you will not do as well as you could. Being off also affects students as they feel like they are falling behind. Life does get in the way and we will of course support families where there are illnesses or other issues, but we strive to have at least 97% because it matters so much.
2. Aspiration. We will be working with students to push toward achieving their target grades. We want our students to thrive in the outside world and we do not want them to settle for less. To support this, Mrs Rich (our Careers Advisor) will be working with students who want to follow apprenticeships. We will unashamedly be pushing our students toward studying A-Levels and we want to push this as a route to university apprenticeships. The difference in salary for apprenticeships at 18 can be huge and we have some great local businesses that want to recruit.

3. Kindness. A very simple word but a very powerful action. We feel that enough time has passed since lockdown, where we did see the impact of COVID on how we talk and act with one another. There is fantastic support for students here and our PSHE curriculum has continued to teach students about the power of kindness. It's time to grow up and whilst we will always work with our students to make the right choices, we will simply not tolerate unkind actions in school. Please talk to your daughter/son about this and contact us if you need any support.
4. Taking part. Clubs start this week and whatever the year group, I implore you to talk to your son/daughter about taking part. Our aim is to also celebrate the things you do outside of school and I thank all those who added links to the Facebook page to point young people in the direction of local clubs. Do send in your stories to your tutor so that we can be part of this as this will be linked to the House competitions!
5. Uniform. The students look very smart and we are so mindful of the cost of living at the moment. We will try to support as best we can in these troubled times, but can we ask that you remember that students are to come to school in shoes and not trainers, I remember how much I used to wear out my trainers as a teenager so I dread to think how much money some of those trainers will cost if you have to replace them!
6. ILT. As said, we will share timetables with you but we are trying to move to a system where we use various methods to allow the students to get immediate feedback when completing ILT. You may notice more of this goes online, but we have researched effective methods and feel that more short bursts of ILT that support retrieval and repetition are vital in making learning stick. It also means you will be called on less to try to solve things as a parent, and we will be increasing this in tandem with the launch of our 1:1 devices.
7. Lockers. We have installed the personal effects lockers and the codes are now sorted! As a reminder, every student has one and any student bringing a phone or jewellery to school MUST put them in the locker before school and collect them after school. As you know, parents must not contact students in school and should use the main school number if needed. Please discuss this as we will no longer follow up on any lost items because we have provided a safe place for them.

It promises to be another exciting year and I look forward to us all working together to ensure we can live our leading aim of 'each and every learner achieving their maximum potential and enjoying the process'. I thank you in advance for your continued support of us at Dene Magna.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Brady
Headteacher