

DENE MAGNA



Leading : Learning : Training : Technology

Headteacher: Stephen Brady BSc(Hons)



Starting at Dene Magna School



2024



*Information and top tips for parents/carers
to help the transition process*



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The aim of this booklet is to help you support your child through the first few weeks of beginning secondary school.

Starting secondary school is an exciting time, for some students. It can also be a daunting and apprehensive time. Students face exciting new challenges as they meet new teachers and study new subjects in a new, much larger environment.

From working with our Year 7 students we have been able to identify what their worries were when they started secondary school. Students in Year 7 are given a huge amount of support in their first year to help them make the transition successfully. This will involve working with a very experienced team of Year 7 tutors. This booklet will hopefully give you some tips and advice about how you can support your child during this period and to help prepare them for the challenges ahead.

The School Day

At Dene Magna we run a two week timetable—Week A and Week B—it is important students remember that their lessons are not the same on both weeks.

Getting used to the Dene Magna day will take some time. The school day is structured in the following way:

08.40 — 09.10	-	RFL, Tutor and RSHE
09.10 — 10.10	-	Period 1
10.10 — 11.10	-	Period 2
11.10 — 11.35	-	Break (25 mins)
11.35 — 12.35	-	Period 3
12.35 - 13.20	-	Lunch (45 mins)
13.20 — 14.20	-	Period 4
14.20 — 15.20	-	Period 5

Role of Tutor/Head of House

The tutor will monitor your child's progress. They will see them every morning before lessons start. The tutor will also deliver healthy education, relationships, sex and health educations, (RSHE).

Your child's tutor should be the first point of contact. You will no longer have the day to day contact with your child's teacher as you may have had at primary school. If you wish to speak to your child's tutor, most tutors are happy to be contacted by telephone or email. If there is a problem they will aim to reply within 24 hours.

Heads of House will deal with significant problems and will be in touch if there are issues or concerns about progress that need to be discussed.

Wilson House

Mrs Danielle Hill, Head of House

Jenner House

Miss Laura Burt, Head of House

Foley House

Mr Ashley James, Head of House

Dowty House

Mr Aaron Underwood, Head of House

Student Support Mentors

Mrs Tracey Hoare—Year 7 & 8

Mrs Rachel Beard—Year 9 & 10

Mrs Christina Freeman—Year 11

Uniform

Our school uniform consists of:

- White Shirt/Blouse
- Smart Black Trousers (not skin tight)
- Black Pleated Skirt (similar to the Banner skirt)
- Dene Magna Tie
- Dene Magna Jumper
- Black socks
- Tights should be black in the winter or flesh coloured in the summer
- Black, leather look, sensible shoes with no coloured markings—not canvas or having a sports logo

Jumpers for both boys and girls will show their house colours on the piping on the 'V' neck.

- No extremes of hair colour. E.g. only one natural colour. No extremes of style. E.g. hair styles should be graduated in length (no tramlines). Long hair (shoulder length or longer) is tied back, both boys and girls
- Students with pierced ears are allowed one pair of studs (ear lobe only). We would prefer students not to have any adornments at all. Nose studs, tops of ears, or any other body piercings are not allowed. Students should not expect to have an inappropriate piercing and then be allowed to wear it until it has healed. Clear studs are also not allowed.
- School jumpers and ties can be purchased from Gooch Sports in Newent.
- We expect parents to support us with these uniform requirements.

PE Kit

BOYS & GIRLS

All PE kit for boys and girls is now the same.

You will need: Blue 1/4 Zip Top Navy/ White, Polo Shirt Navy/White, Panelled Shorts Navy/White, 3 Stripe Pro Socks Navy/White.

You will also require: Football/ Rugby Boots, Trainers.

Optional Extras: DM Leggings (for girls), Shin Pads, Thermal under tops (Navy/Black).

This PE kit is available to buy online via a link to 'Harris Sports' on the Dene Magna School website. The link is available via the 'Parents and Students' section of the website. You can also buy this via the telephone by ringing 01275 874351.

Absence

Please telephone the school on the first morning of absence. A letter explaining the absence must be brought in on the day the student returns. For appointments, students should bring in their appointment card or letter. If you can make appointments out of school hours that would be appreciated. We aim for high attendance. Students learn best when they are in school and we appreciate your support. Should your child need to sign out during the school day a parent/carer needs to report to Reception to collect them. We are supported by our Attendance Officer Mr Bishop.

Requests for absence during term time

We do not expect you to take holidays in term time. Absence from school in term time will only be authorised for exceptional circumstances and likened to compassionate leave. Forms for requests for absence during term time need to be requested from Reception in advance.

Mobile phones/I-Pods, personal belongings.

Mobile phones are not allowed to be used during the school day. If students choose to bring their phones to school please remember it is the **responsibility of the student** to keep these safe. We do not encourage students to bring other personal belongings because of the cost to parents/carers of replacing costly devices. Students need to place all valuable items such as phones, jewellery and money in their personal lockers at the start of the school day. Students found with mobile phones out during the school day will be placed in detention.

Equipment

Students should have the following:

- Pencil case—named
- Pens, pencils and coloured pencils
- 300mm ruler
- Eraser
- Sharpener
- Planner
- Compass
- Protractor or angle measure
- Scientific calculator

Equipment it would be useful to have at home for Independent Learning Tasks:-

- Scissors
- Sticky Tape
- Glue
- Stencils
- Memory Stick

Water

In order to keep hydrated throughout the day students are allowed to drink water in lessons. Please note it should only be water in their bottles and they can refill these at one of the water machines around school during break or lunchtime.

Newsletters

Newsletters are published termly. In our bid to become more environmentally friendly it is now our practice to publish newsletters on the website and send email alerts to parents/carers. Details of how you can receive these will be provided or can be found on the school website.

Feedback to Parents/Carers

Throughout the year we have a number of opportunities for you to keep track of the progress that your daughter/son is making in their learning. We know how important this dialogue is, as it sends a clear message to students that we are all working together with the clear aim of ensuring that they can make the best use of the opportunities that are open to them at Dene Magna.

Interim Reviews

Each student will receive three 'Interim Reviews' a year. These will show the progress that your son/daughter has made.

In KS3 one of these reviews will include a tutor comment. The aim here is to give a view of your son/daughter as an individual and how her/his tutor feels they are progressing.

In KS4 one of the Interim Reviews will include a written comment, focusing on achievements and next steps. From these you should have a clear idea of how he/she can improve.

An electronic version of the Interim Reviews will be available through the "My Child At School"

Information on accessing the "My Child At School App" will be issued once your son/daughter has commenced their education at Dene Magna school.

Parents'/Carers' Evenings

As a school we value Parents'/Carers' Evenings. They are an invaluable opportunity to continue the triangle of dialogue between parents/carers, teachers and students. Our expectation is that all parents/carers will attend these evenings and through this dialogue we can work together to both inspire and support your daughter/son to be the best they can be.

Literacy in the Curriculum

Literacy is the ability to read, view, write, design, speak and listen in a way that allows us to communicate effectively and to make sense of the world. Here at Dene Magna we have long believed that literacy plays a key role in the progress of every child. The development of literacy skills across all curriculum areas is vital. Learning in any subject area requires the use of language; therefore, reading and writing are essential tools for learning. Being able to read and write accurately, to listen carefully and to talk clearly about ideas will increase the opportunities for young people in all aspects of life and will allow them to participate fully in learning and later in a work environment.

At primary level students learn the basic tools of communication through reading, writing, speaking and listening and the use of communication through digital media. At Dene Magna we continue to build these skills and through different experiences and outcomes promote the development of critical and creative thinking. Every teacher in each area of the curriculum finds opportunities to encourage young people to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will help them to develop their language skills further. Literacy across our curriculum helps to develop each student's ability to:

- ◆ Write for a variety of purposes and audiences, collect information, organise ideas and write accurately to show "what they know" across subject areas
- ◆ Access information and read with understanding and comprehension
- ◆ Speak and listen effectively across a range of contexts, developing their ability to negotiate, hypothesise, present information and extend and clarify their ideas and thinking.

In addition to this, it also has an impact on their self-esteem, motivation and ability to work independently. This year students will be a part of the Accelerated Reader scheme, which is a customised reading programme that meets the needs of individual students. It encourages students to read widely, independently and confidently, whilst allowing staff to monitor progress and support where necessary. This programme also helps equip students with the literacy skills, which will empower them in their studies and in the wider world beyond school. Ensuring that each young person masters the skills of literacy in a wide range of contexts is essential to enable them to access learning throughout the curriculum. We believe that we equip our students with the necessary transferable skills to be fully literate in the 21st century and, as such, literacy is at the heart of the school's core values.

Each week we dedicate an RFL session to engaging students in spelling and grammar (SPAG). The activities that we complete include mini-spelling tests as well as learning and using an ambitious word of the week. The word of the week is printed in the student planner, so can be used and discussed at home too.

We also complete grammar activities where we focus on common mistakes and find out about where certain words come from.

Students earn merit and house points throughout the year as part of this process.

The role parents/carers play in supporting Literacy

Parents/carers play a crucial role in helping children to develop literacy skills from an early age. You may be used to listening to your child read every day. Whilst we realise the time implications this may have, this is sometimes lost in the early years of secondary school. Please encourage your child to read at home regularly and to continue questioning them about their understanding, and what they are reading. Parents/carers can contribute further to their children's learning by encouraging children to talk about their thoughts and ideas. Parents/carers can encourage children to explore literacy outside the classroom. We have a fantastic library which our students love.

Young people will enjoy reading different types of texts and all reading helps them to develop their skills. So whether they are reading a book, a blog, a magazine or a sports report, it will help if parents are encouraging and supportive.

Access to school nurse

Dene Magna has a school nurse. She does a drop in session on Tuesday during the lunch break to see anyone who needs her help or advice on a confidential basis. The nurse liaises regularly with staff and parents on health issues and contributes to the Health Education programme run by the school.

Independent learning tasks (Homework)

Details of ILT and the deadlines will be published on individual Google Classrooms/Student App. On odd occasions it may be inappropriate to set ILT.

Rewards and Sanctions

The school has a well established rewards and sanctions system. Students who make a good effort and produce good work are rewarded by their teachers when they go above and beyond expectations of the WALT and WILF in lessons. These contribute to the House Cup Competition. Sanctions can take several forms. Detentions can be issued at break time, at lunch time or after school. These can be with subject staff, tutors, House Heads or members of the Leadership Group. Thankfully, detentions are rare at Dene Magna.

Extra curricular activities

The school offers a wide range of extra curricular activities. A list of these can be found on the school website or internally on subject/tutor noticeboards. There are lots of exciting and enjoyable activities to participate in at Dene Magna. We ask you to encourage your child to get involved in the wide variety of school and house activities that will be on offer and should your child be in a school team we encourage parental spectators.

Routines

It may be beneficial to have a structured routine for the first few weeks. It is surprising how long it can take to get dressed, have breakfast, set off for school. It may be useful to agree after school arrangements and to ensure they know what to do if something goes wrong, make sure they have emergency contact numbers and know which family member or friend to contact. It is important that students pack their bags the night before to make sure they are fully resourced for the next day.

What your son/daughter may worry about.... and how we deal with it!

Making friends

Some will come from large primary schools, whilst others from very small ones. They will all be apprehensive about meeting new people and making new friends. During the first few weeks the tutors will work through a variety of activities to ensure they develop new friendships. Some students will maintain their friendships groups from primary schools, however, it is not uncommon that by the end of the year you may find that your child will have a completely different set of friends.

Getting lost

Dene Magna is a large school and tutors work with the students to make sure they know where they are going. It can take a few weeks to get used to the school environment. Staff and older students are on hand to help give advice in between lessons during the first few weeks until students are more confident about their environment.

Bullying

Any form of bullying is not tolerated at Dene Magna and you can rest assured that any incident is dealt with quickly, discreetly and effectively.

The school has a clearly established Anti-Bullying policy. This is published on the school website. It will be discussed with students in tutor time and is often revisited throughout the year.

If there are any issues, then please report them to either your son/daughter's tutor, Head of House or student support mentor.

Top tips for parents/carers

- Over the first few weeks with all the changes to their routines your son/daughter will be very tired. Try to find out about their day but don't be surprised if when you ask them what they have done that they will be reluctant to tell you!
 - Check their bags and their planners every night – ensure children are fully equipped for the day ahead.
 - Be aware of their subject and homework timetables.
 - Allocate a time for homework each night, provide support and assistance.
 - Try and encourage them over a period of time to be more independent and praise and encourage them wherever possible.
 - Reassure them and support them in developing organisation skills.
 - Have a routine. This will help their organisation in the morning and evening. Teach them a routine for emptying bags. Help them to pack their bags in the evening. Getting them into a good routine will save hours and a great deal of stress!
 - You may have another child or children at Dene Magna; remember that no two children are the same and you may have a different transition experience with each child.
 - Ensure students wear the correct uniform. Uniform and equipment can be expensive, so please name everything as it is worn for 5 days out of 7 days per week.
 - If you have a concerns then please contact us. Difficulties are best resolved at an early stage .
 - **Do not worry** – it can be just as stressful a time for parents/carers as students. The vast majority of students transfer to Dene Magna with no difficulty at all. If at any time you have a concern please contact your son/daughter's tutor.
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Dene Magna – Leading aim....

**To help each and every learner achieve their
maximum
potential and enjoy the process**

*We would greatly appreciate any feedback
or comments you have to make about this booklet
or the transition process.*

*Please email your comments to
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