

DENE MAGNA

Leading : Learning : Training : Technology

Headteacher: Stephen Brady BSc(Hons)



Starting at Dene Magna School



2020



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



National Teaching School
designated by
National College for
Teaching & Leadership



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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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 PSHE
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 daily, once in the morning and then the afternoon. During the afternoon period they will participate in assemblies or complete tutorial activities to help them settle in. The tutor will also deliver personal, social and health education, PSHE.

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 get back to you as quickly as possible. We do ask that you are a little patient as some days are very busy!

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

Miss Laura Burt, Head of House
Mrs Tracey Hoare, Student Support Mentor

Jenner House

Mr Anthony Tolley, Head of House
Mrs Carolyn Freeman, Student Support Mentor

Foley House

Mr Ashley James, Head of House
Mrs Jane Evenson, Student Support Mentor

Dowty House

Mr Heath Adams, Head of House
Mrs Christina Freeman, Student Support Mentor

Uniform

GIRLS

- Wear a white blouse with the top button done up
- Black Banner Charleston Pleated Skirt or Black Blue Max Banner Greenwich Trousers/Banner Trimley Trousers.
- A Dene Magna school tie
- Black, leather look, sensible shoes, with no coloured markings—not canvas
- Black socks, ankle or knee length. Tights should be black in the winter or flesh coloured in the summer.

BOYS

- Wear a white shirt with the top button done up
- Black Blue Max Banner Falmouth Boys' Flat Front Trousers
- A Dene Magna school tie
- Black, leather look, sensible shoes with no coloured markings—not canvas
- Black socks.

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

- No extremes of 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
- Coats should be of a dark colour with no obvious logos
- All school uniform apart from PE kit (see attached PE Kit information) can be purchased from Ross Labels or 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: Gilbert Jersey, Gilbert Shorts or Skort, Gilbert Socks, White Polo Shirt. Embroidery of the school badge is included. Names can be embroidered on to all kit at a small cost.

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

Optional Extras: Shin Pads, Thermal under tops (Navy/Black), Dene Magna Fleece.

This 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 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. 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.

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. All expensive items should be handed to PE staff during a PE lesson and not left in the changing rooms. 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
- Pair of compasses
- Protractor or angle measure
- Scientific calculator

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

English dictionary	Scissors
French dictionary	Sticky Tape
Atlas	Glue
Bible	Stencils
Thesaurus	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 at 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. There will also be an 'Approach to Learning' grade that will give you a starting point to discuss with your daughter/son on how they are engaging with particular subjects and lessons.

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.

A paper version of the Interim Reviews will be sent home with students and an electronic version will be available through our Parent ePortal.

Parents' /Carers' Evenings

As a school we very much 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.

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.

Planners—parents'/carers' use

All students have a school planner. This is packed with information about school and the students will use this every day, as it contains their school timetable and they will record all ILT in this. The planner can be a key communication tool between parents/carers and tutors. If there is a problem or a question you may have there is a useful section at the bottom of each week in which you can contact us.

Please encourage your child to check their planner every night. We ask that planners are signed by parents/carers on a weekly basis. Tutors will check planners on a weekly basis.

Access to school nurse

Dene Magna has a school nurse. She does a drop in session on Monday 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)

Timetables are published for students and parents and a copy is available on website. Details of ILT and the deadlines should be found in the students' planners. On odd occasions it may be inappropriate to set ILT. If this is the case, staff will instruct students to write 'none set' in their planners.

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 with merits. These are collected and certificates awarded. These also contribute to the House Cup Competition. Sanctions can take several forms. Detentions can be issued at break time, at lunch time or one hour 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 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 child 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

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.

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. If there are any issues, then please report them to either your 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 they 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 less 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 child'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
Kellie Beale, Assistant Headteacher
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