

October 2020

Headlines

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are almost at the end of our first term and what a term it has been! We are delighted to have welcomed back all our students following the national lockdown and have been incredibly impressed by the attitude and engagement in lessons of the vast majority of students and the way they have settled back into school life. Year 7 have settled in particularly well despite not having their usual transition activities and it was lovely to see them growing in confidence as they took part in the 'Talk the Talk' workshops; all students were able to give a short talk independently without notes by the end of the day, a remarkable achievement. We were also able to complete some of our transition activities during the first two weeks back.

We do, however, have a new normal! Students have remained largely in the same classrooms within a year group bubble and teachers have moved around to teach them. This has worked really well but has proved exhausting for staff. The staggered lunch and break times (as well as start and finish times) has created additional duties and cleaning regimes and we are all very much looking forward to the half term break!

Unfortunately, this year we were unable to hold our WOW days for Year 6 students, and our Open evening for prospective parents had to go virtual! Please can I invite you to take a look on the front page of our website where you can view our Open evening video, a Virtual Tour by students, information about our Curriculum as well as click on a link to Frequently asked questions. We are rather proud of them, and particularly of the students involved, particularly as the videos were all completed in a short space of time. It would be great if you could share these videos with your family and friends so that they get as much exposure as possible.

I have spent a great deal of time over the past 4 weeks showing around prospective parents in groups of six and it has been a delight. Walking around the school and seeing the quality of lessons that are being delivered under such challenging circumstances has been amazing. All the parents I have shown around have been extremely impressed by the calmness of the school, the engagement of students in their learning and the processes that have been put in place to combat Covid-19 and keep our community safe.

You will by now know that we have had a single positive case of Covid-19 within the academy; fortunately, it was an adult who has limited contact with children or other staff, therefore, there are just a handful of staff and only two students affected who have been told to self-isolate. Please be assured that you would have been informed directly by me if your child was affected. Our procedures have since been scrutinised by a team from the Public Health team and were deemed to be extremely robust, therefore we know that we are doing everything we can to ensure the academy is safe.

Live lessons:

We have been trialling and will be ready in the new term to meet the expectation of continuing education should either your child be required to self-isolate, a cohort of students or indeed the whole school. We will send out specifics in the new term; however, in the meantime a survey has been done on *Show My Homework* for your child to complete so that we can identify any access considerations. We

have also proudly trialled if a member of staff was to isolate as a result of a track and trace notification, about them still being able to deliver live to your children, whilst supervised by a cover supervisor in the room.

Virtual Events

Thank you to all those that have attended our virtual events this year so far. If you have not had a chance to see what has been going on please visit the school website. We are planning to continue to hold all events that are advertised on our website, all be it in a virtual format. Parents Evening will continue this year on the published dates; however, we are looking at the most suitable platform and method to deliver the best experience for you and our team.

Examination success

I am delighted to announce that our examination results this year went up again and students have made **good** progress. There are no reliable National average scores this year and the government are not using progress measures, however, in comparison with last year, our attainment has increased significantly, and our progress is now positive. Our top achieving student, Madison Read, achieved 10 grade 9s and one grade 8 at GCSE which is a remarkable achievement. We are also very proud of the process undertaken by the staff to ensure accuracy of the centre assessed grades last year and are confident they represent accurately what the students would have likely achieved. When we use these figures and apply to previous progress scores, it shows that we are continuing our upward trend of improvement in results.

I am extremely proud of all that we have achieved and am really excited for the future of Dorcan and our vision of becoming an outstanding school of first choice at the heart of our local community.

Prelim examinations

Prelims take place for Year 11 from the 9th November; further details about prelim exams and an update about summer exams will follow in the new term from Mr Morgans.

Behaviour in the community

Unfortunately, over the past couple of weeks we have seen a rise in students becoming involved in physical altercations on the way home from school and, also occasionally in school. We have a small number of students who are failing to demonstrate our Dorcan values of kindness and respect within our local community and are bringing the school into disrepute. We understand that this is a challenging time for students and their families, however, this is not an excuse for fighting and physical violence and it certainly is not the answer to any problem.

At The Dorcan Academy we do not condone violence of any kind and take reports of bullying very seriously. If your child is involved in physically assaulting another student or fighting of any kind, either in school, or outside of school whilst wearing our school uniform, they can expect to receive a long exclusion at the very least and in some cases, lose their place at the academy, according to our published policy. Already this year, one member of our community is no longer with us. If your child is involved in standing by and encouraging or 'egging on' other students to fight or be physically violent, or, even worse, filming it to show on social media, this will be taken extremely seriously and your child considered to be **equally guilty** of the offence.

We have worked too hard for too long to improve our school standards and its reputation in the community for a very small group of children to ruin it. All of the time spent making videos of our

fabulous school are negated by just one video shown on social media of our students behaving in an uncivilized and undignified manner. At Dorcan we teach students to Be kind, Show Respect and Do their Best; this message goes out on an almost daily basis. As parents, we need you to reinforce this message too. We want our community to be proud of us and to be a better place because we are in it.

Uniform reminder

Just a gentle reminder that as the weather gets colder and more wintry, we appreciate your support in enabling us to maintain high standards of uniform. We do not allow boots in any form (unless it is snowing in which case we will make concessions and put a notice on our website) and The Dorcan Academy jumper is the only jumper we accept (no hoodies). Hats and scarfs if worn must be removed in lessons.

Please also ensure that over the half term break your child doesn't do anything to their hair, nails or anything else that cannot be easily rectified before returning. Hair colours are required to be natural and we do not allow shorter than a no. 2. Tramlines are not allowed. We do not allow false nails, coloured nail varnish or piercings, other than one earring in each ear lobe. Thank you for your support.

Rewards

Currently the House totals are:

- Osprey: 12,752
- Kingfisher: 13,697
- Falcon: 11,915
- Eagle: 9,372

Don't forget to keep earning those house points.

We wish you a relaxing and safe holiday and look forward to seeing everyone again on Monday 2 November 2020.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham

